CULTURE, IDEOLOGY AND EDUCATIONAL CHANGE:

THE CASE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN SLOVAKIA.

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ABSTRACT

This study of cultural and ideological aspects of educational change presents the case of state school teachers of English in Slovakia in the immediate post-1989 period. It considers the problems they face in the successful management of rapid change in their field, at the same time examining the implications of their situation for teacher education and support programmes in the region and elsewhere.

It is argued that the voices of teachers, who are expected to act as both recipients and agents of change, have often been overlooked in previous studies of this type, with the ideas of the educational planner or innovator tending to dominate. The views of older, more experienced teachers in particular have seldom been consulted, with the result that they are sometimes perceived as being 'resistant to change'. In addition, many studies of change fail to take into consideration strong cultural and ideological influences on educational practice: it is claimed that these are of particular importance in the context of post-communist societies opening their doors to ideas imported from the West.

In this study, a combination of interview, focus group and classroom observation data allows the voices of different protagonists (including educational specialists) to emerge. Through the juxtaposition of different accounts of the effects of educational change, it can be shown that successful change management depends very much on teachers themselves, and on their ability to resolve tensions between different cultural and ideological traditions. The provision of support for teachers via published materials, educational projects or collaborative networks also needs to take such traditions into account.

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Abbreviations used in the text

BC	British Council
CEC	Cambridge English Course
DTO	Direct Teaching Operation
EFD	Education for Democracy
EFL	English as a foreign language
ELTECS	English Language Teaching Contacts Scheme
ELT	English language teaching
ELTJ	English Language Teaching Journal
FF	Philosophical Faculty
HZDS	Hnutie Za Demokratické Slovensko (Slovak political party)
IATEFL	International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language
INSET(T)	In-service (teacher) training
MC	Metodicke Centrum
MTV	Music Television
NCEC	New Cambridge English Course
nns	non-native speaker
ns	native speaker
ODA	Overseas Development Agency
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation & Development
PdF	Pedagogical Faculty
PRESET(T)	Pre-service (teacher) training
RSA	Royal Society of Arts
SAIA	Slovak Academic Information Service
SAUA/SATE	Slovak English Language Teachers' Association
SOU	Stredne odborne uciliste (Slovak secondary apprentice schools)
SOS	Stredna odborna skola (Slovak secondary vocational schools)
SPS	Stredna priemyselna skola (Slovak secondary technical schools)
SPU	Statny Pedagogicka Ustov (Slovak Ministry of Education department)
sts	students
TESOL	Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
USIS	United States Information Service
ZS	Zakladna skola (Slovak basic/primary schools)

INTRODUCTION

Context

This research project examines the implications for teachers and the potential for cultural and ideological conflict when the demand for English language teaching leads to educational change, via the transfer of new or unfamiliar approaches, methods, practices and materials. The context chosen is that of Slovakia, a country which has undergone enormous social changes since the 'velvet revolution' in the former Czechoslovakia in 1989. Among the reasons which, I believe, make a Slovak case study of general interest are the following:

- Slovakia is itself a new country facing a struggle for its own national post-communist identity
- It has strong clearly defined educational traditions which it shares with other countries in the region, but not particularly with Britain or the USA
- It also has a strong tradition of teaching languages and promoting the study and teaching of linguistics as exemplified by the Prague School of the 1930s.
- It is easy to pinpoint the starting-point of recent changes in English language teaching as dating from the overthrow of communism in 1989, thus making it possible for clear comparisons to be made before and after this date .
- Slovakia, along with its neighbours has received a sudden and unprecedented influx of 'new' ideas, materials, teachers and 'experts' in the field of English language teaching, contributing towards the accelerating pace of change being felt by teachers

A final reason for choosing to document the Slovak experience of educational change derives from my own direct experience of working in the country in the post-1989 period, specifically as British Council lecturer and teacher trainer attached to the then Department of English Language and Literature of the Pedagogical Faculty of P.J.Safarik University in Presov (now Presov University). My main areas of responsibility were to

design and implement ELT methodology courses for trainee teachers of English studying for a first degree at the university, to supervise trainees involved in teaching practice at local schools, and also to provide in-service support for local teachers in state primary and secondary schools.

From this experience, as a result of an increasing number of contacts with schools in different parts of the country, a picture began to emerge of teachers who were coming to terms with rapid educational changes with varying degrees of success. While some seemed to welcome change, others clearly felt alarmed and threatened by it, and a third (and seemingly the largest) category seemed to have mixed and rather confused feelings. This research project is intended to provide an opportunity to allow all of their voices to emerge and to be heard by a wider audience.

Aims & questions

The specific aims and the type of questions to be addressed by this research project can be summarized as follows:-

1. To examine the ways in which the teaching of English in Slovakia has changed since the 1989 'velvet revolution', and the reasons for such changes.

The project seeks to discover to what extent imported English language coursebook materials have replaced those which are locally produced, and the extent to which this has had an effect on teaching methods and approaches in Slovakia. The nature of local cultural and ideological traditions in education will also be examined.

2. To determine the effects of change principally from the perspective of teachers in state schools in Slovakia, but complemented by the perspectives of educational project planners, textbook writers and teacher trainers.

The extent to which new methods and approaches have come into conflict with local traditional educational practices will be considered, both in a cultural sense and in an

ideological sense. The status and authority of the non-native speaker teacher in the face of the influx of imported expertise will also be discussed in this context.

3. To document the experiences of Slovak teachers concerning strategies for coping with change.

The more problematic aspects of educational change will be examined, in particular the ways in which they affect the ELT syllabus. In addition, the kind of skills and strategies needed by teachers in dealing with such problem areas will be identified and appraised.

4. To draw conclusions concerning future support and development programmes for teachers.

The question of how best to support teachers in the management of change will be discussed. An attempt will be made to clarify possible roles and criteria for success for ELT projects, publishers, teacher trainers and teachers themselves in this respect. Routes towards collaborative action both within the teaching profession and between educational researchers (as in the case of this research project) will be explored.

Arguments

Some of the arguments or hypotheses which the project would like to test against available data include the following:-

1. That the post-1989 social changes in Slovakia have led to demands for educational change particularly in the area of foreign language teaching. It is expected that most teachers and their students will have an underlying, but not necessarily focussed, enthusiasm for educational change and a willingness to try out new ideas.

2. That change often has unplanned and unforeseen effects: these can place teachers in a difficult position since they are expected to be both change recipients and change agents.

There is a problem of 'pro-innovation bias' by which teachers feel obliged to change more than they would like. There is also a considerable gap between the views of educational planners and teachers with respect to specific ELT changes.

3. That when educational change crosses the boundaries between contrasting cultural and educational traditions, the result can be both a conflict of interests and of different ideologies. Two major contexts for cross-cultural educational change and potential areas of conflict are (a) the importation of EFL coursebooks, and (b) UK-funded ELT projects.

4. That teachers will employ a variety of teaching strategies for coping with the new and the unexpected. Successful change may also be related to levels of teaching skills and teaching background.

5. That support and development programmes are needed to help teachers cope with the implications of change; collaborative action involving both teachers and specialists is a likely way to achieve this.

These arguments are developed through the thesis in the following ways:-

Chapter 1 provides the background to the recent changes in ELT in Slovak state schools. The source of many of the cultural, ideological and linguistic traditions which influence present-day educational practice are identified and comparisons are drawn with traditions imported from the West.

Chapter 2 provides a critical appraisal of the ideas of writers in various disciplines concerning the management of educational change, the importance of cultural and ideological elements within educational traditions, and the conflict caused by the juxtaposition of different language teaching approaches, methods and materials.

Chapter 3 discusses the design and development of the research project, describing the types of data collected, including quantitative data from questionnaires and qualitative data from interviews, focus groups and classroom observations. A rationale is provided for the case study format, as well as for the analysis of the qualitative data by means of the creation of data categories.

Chapters 4-7 contain a case study report with the results from the survey questionnaire among teachers, extracts from transcripts of interviews, focus groups, school visit journals and lesson observation notes. Each type of data is discussed in turn, with *Chapter 4* presenting questionnaire findings in different regions, *Chapter 5* contrasting the views of different educational specialists concerning the effects of change, while *Chapters 6 and 7* aim to present the personal accounts of basic school, secondary school and requalifier teachers.

Chapter 8 draws together the different types of data by means of category analysis. Pre-determined broad categories closely linked to the aims of the research project are identified , while more detailed sub-categories are allowed to emerge from the data itself. Issues arising from each category are explored, contrasting the opinions of different protagonists in the process of educational change.

Chapter 9 concludes the thesis by summarizing the main findings emerging from the data and explaining their significance for a wider audience. Using the findings as a starting-point, it looks forward to possible future initiatives to support teachers in the region, and discusses how different levels of collaborative action can strengthen the teaching profession in general.

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

1.1. The collapse of communism

The dramatic events which took place in 1989 in Eastern and Central European countries have had a profound effect on the educational systems of all countries in the region. The forty-five years of communism were years of certainty - both for those within the system and for those outside it. From a Western European point of view the Iron Curtain constituted the most evident frontier line that existed on the world map. The geopolitics of the Cold War resulted in a clear map, mentally as well.

Why did communism collapse? Karsten and Majoor (1994:17-19) argue that three main factors contributed. The first was a gradual loss of political legitimacy. The erosion of communist ideology manifested itself in many non-believers and disillusioned followers who in turn influenced others over a number of years. The realization that the Soviet Union under Gorbachev would no longer intervene to support any neighbouring communist regime under siege from its own citizens appears to have removed the last impediment to action, rather than providing the initial spark for the process of political change in the region.

A second factor to be taken into consideration (according to Karsten and Majoor) is the economic decay suffered by all of the former communist regimes. It is argued that the feeling of deprivation in communist countries was widespread and real - and that this deprivation was attributed to the system. Finally, the same authors point to a third factor, the rediscovery of democratic pluralism. One of the main aims of communism was to transform man and society under the unifying power of the State. In the late 1960s and 1970s small groups of intellectuals re-developed the notion of pluralism - the idea that there were alternative ways of thinking and living outside the official structures sponsored by the State.

The effects of the overthrow of communism are still so recent in all of the countries affected that they are still extremely difficult to analyse. What is clear is that the wider changes taking place in each of the former communist societies are profoundly influencing the education systems and even the general approach to education.

Four key areas of change were seen as essential by the first post-communist government in the former Czechoslovakia. These were the de-politicisation of education and training, ending tight ideological control; the recognition of the rights of pupils and their parents to choose their education; the breaking-down of the state monopoly by allowing the re-introduction of private schools; and decentralization in the management of the education system "as part of the general liberalization process as well as an application of the principle of subsidiarity, essential in a modern pluralistic democracy". (OECD Reviews of National Policies for Education: The Czech Republic, 1996:17).

But in some ways these proposed areas of change were not offering anything radically new. Rather they were an expression of the public desire to return to the educational traditions of the Czech and Slovak republics. It was somehow inevitable that at the beginning of the 1990s Czechoslovakia would seek to go back to its educational roots. "In that sense, it could even be said that a restoration, rather than a revolution, has accompanied the end of the communist regime" (ibid:19).

1. 2. The education system in the nineteenth century

Looking at educational change from a Slovak perspective, we need to go back to the nineteenth century in order to understand the deep attachment to educational traditions established before the advent of the Soviet model of education. The Slovak Republic has been an independent state since 1993 - in fact for the first time in its history (if we discount a brief and controversial period during World War II). During the whole of the nineteenth century it was part of an Austrian Empire which spoke at least 12 different languages and was constantly struggling with the rights of different ethnic groups to self-

rule. But concessions made to the more powerful groups, particularly the Hungarians, made dealing with the other peoples (including the Slovaks) more complicated. In 1848 the Hungarians achieved self-rule, while the Slovaks who found themselves in the newly-established Hungarian territories found their identity, language and culture to be more and more under threat.

In the 1840s, however, a Slovak national movement had emerged, demanding (among other things) that Slovak should be considered a separate language rather than a dialect of Czech. In order to promote the teaching of the language, Slovak public schools were to be established, first at primary level and then, later, at secondary level. However, in 1874 the Hungarian authorities ordered the closing of the secondary schools on the grounds that they were producing future nationalist leaders. Young Slovaks therefore had little option but to accept an education through the medium of Hungarian.

The Magyarisation of education and the closing of the Slovak-medium secondary schools is a phenomenon which is clearly remembered even today and is used by Slovak nationalist politicians as a continuing source of friction with Hungary. According to Johnson (1985:34), from 1879 all primary school teachers were required to be conversant in Hungarian.

The most serious step, however, was the Apponyi law of 1907. According to this law, the Hungarian Minister of Culture and Education decreed that teachers in church schools were henceforth state employees, that they must be able to read, write and teach Hungarian, and by the end of the fourth year of school, non-Hungarian pupils must be able to express themselves in Hungarian, both orally and in writing. A teacher's promotion was made contingent on the success in that regard by his pupils. (ibid: 34).

By 1918, there were only 276 Slovak schools left - all of them primary, catering for less than one eighth of Slovak primary school children. Even in these schools only four to six hours of weekly instruction was in Slovak.

No one knows how many Slovak students went to the Czech lands to continue their education and escape Magyarisation. Many also left the European continent during a period of mass emigration (particularly from poorer Eastern Slovakia) and continued their education in America. The Hungarian authorities made it more difficult for these people to return by refusing to recognise their qualifications. (ibid:32) What effects all of these pressures might have had on the Slovak language and the Slovak national identity will never be known - the four years of World War I changed the map of the region and Slovakia found itself part of the new Czechoslovak republic and outside the defunct Austro-Hungarian empire.

1.3. Education in the first Czechoslovak republic

During the latter part of the nineteenth century the Empire had been effectively divided into two different halves with the Czech lands being under Austrian jurisdiction while the Slovaks remained part of 'Upper Hungary'. The Czechs had always resented the fact that they had failed to become the equals of the Austrians. Nevertheless, compared to the Hungarians, the Austrians had been quite willing to allow a wide range of civil liberties. In this more liberal climate the figure of Tomas Masaryk had emerged in the 1890s with the (then seemingly bizarre) notion of closer cooperation between Czechs and Slovaks.

During the First World War, many Czechs and Slovaks fought together, initially with the Austrians and later against them. In 1918, as the Habsburg Empire finally collapsed, the Slovaks agreed to become part of the new republic of Czechoslovakia headed by Masaryk after roughly a thousand years of separation. The new republic began life in a healthy state since the Czechs and Slovaks between them had inherited much of the heavy industry of both the Austrians and the Hungarians. The economic strength deriving from this inheritance enabled the new republic to take on the enormous task of establishing and investing in a joint educational system.

According to Johnson (1985:87), while the Czech lands already had "reasonably competent personnel available" to help establish a new system, in Slovakia the situation was not so straightforward, since most educational administrators had moved to the new shrunken Hungarian state leaving an administrative void to be filled. It is probably for this reason that the initiatives for educational reform always seemed to emanate from the Czech lands and to be adopted a little later in Slovakia, a process which arguably has continued till the present day.

During the 1920s it was established that (optional) nursery school would be from ages 3-6, followed by compulsory education beginning at age 6, usually in a state basic (primary) school. After five years, a child could transfer to a middle school or even to a *gymnazium* (high school) , provided that he/she passed the necessary exams. Children could also stay on at primary school for a further three years. In 1922, eight years of basic education became compulsory in the Czech lands; in Slovakia, where teachers and facilities were not always available, this change was only finalized in 1928. After completing four years of middle school education, children could progress to a vocational school, a teacher training institution or be transferred to a *gymnazium* (see Appendix A diagram).

During this period Andic (1954:25), referred to by Johnson (1985:95), specifies three aims of the new education system. The first was social - that there should be equality of opportunity for all, regardless of race, social class or religion. The second aim was that education should be non-political, allowing a wide variety of points of view. Finally, financial aid should be available for those who needed it.

At secondary level the *gymnazium* was quickly established as the foundation stone of the education system leading to the school-leaving examination (*maturita*). Although other schools could also award the *maturita*, they were in a 40% to 60% minority in this respect. According to Johnson (1985:112) the basis for the *classical gymnazium* was an

Austrian plan from 1848, "whose antecedents stretched back to the Middle Ages". This type of *gymnazium* prepared its students mainly for university study and offered an education which gave a strong emphasis to the study of Latin and Greek. In Slovakia there were only three or four of these schools; in the Czech lands many more.

The *real gymnazium*, first established in Austria in 1908, substituted French or English for Greek in the curriculum. "Because all the *gymnazia* in Slovakia essentially were newly established, the *real gymnazium* was the most widespread type of institution from the very beginning" (ibid:113). In the republic as a whole it quickly began to replace its classical counterpart. Two other types of gymnazium, the *realka* and the *real reformed gymnazium* were also established later, with an ever-decreasing emphasis on classical languages, which were replaced by French or English. In accordance with European (ie Austrian) tradition, *gymnazium* students took almost only prescribed subjects with very few options.

Another type of school which awarded the *maturita* was the 4-year teaching-training institute, which must have been of particular importance in Slovakia, given the shortage of qualified teachers. In 1919 and 1920 schools were giving teaching positions to students who had completed *gymnazium*, but who had no teaching qualifications or experience. The teacher training institutes spread over the country to address this problem area. Demand for places began to grow, so that by the late 1920s the problem of unqualified teachers seemed to have been solved .(ibid:144).

Finally, vocational secondary schools (offering 4 year courses) were also able to award the *maturita*. These were the schools that psychologically replaced the *gymnazia* under communism as "the main stream of secondary education" (Kohlova 1985:24). However, in the 1920s and 1930s, they were considered to be inferior in every respect to *gymnazia*, particularly in Slovakia. It seems that Slovak parents would even have preferred to send their children to one of the few surviving Hungarian *gymnazia*.

1.4. The development of linguistics and language teaching before World War II

We have already noted the fact that during the inter-war years, schools in the new Czechoslovakia were giving increasing importance to the teaching of living rather than dead languages as a major component in secondary education. This growing interest in the teaching of modern languages coincided with the development of a major school of linguistics in Czechoslovakia - the Prague school.

Vilem Mathesius, a Czech Anglicist, who taught at Charles University in Prague is considered to be the founder of the Prague school. Influenced by a series of lectures given by the Swiss-born linguist Saussure, Mathesius argued for the synchronic rather than the historical study of languages. According to Sampson (1980:103), the hallmark of Prague linguistics was that it saw language in terms of function. In other words, the Prague linguists analysed a given language in order to explain how its structural components behaved. In this respect they differed from American "descriptivists" such as Bloomfield (eg 1933), who were content to focus mainly on linguistic description. The Prague School tried to go beyond description to explanation, often using contrasting structures in different languages to make their point. An example would be an attempt to answer the question of why the passive construction is more frequent in English than in other languages such as Czech. Whereas, (according to Sampson), descriptivists were suspicious of questions beginning with "why?", the Prague linguists would whole-heartedly tackle such questions head-on, using a contrastive analysis of different languages, but especially Czech and English, to provide the answers. It can be argued that to some extent they were also concerned with the standardization of linguistic usage and were thus 'prescriptivists' rather than just 'non-descriptivists'.

The influence of the early Prague school was felt in many European countries and also in the USA. Not surprisingly it also had a great effect on the study and teaching of languages in pre-war Czechoslovakia and has continued to have this effect until now.

Vachek (1972:12) points out, for example, that while Western linguistics only began to promote contrastive analysis in the 1950s, linguists of the early Prague school were already applying in the 1930s what they termed "the method of analytical comparison", especially between modern English and modern Czech.

Vachek (ibid.:24) also considers the direct effects of ideas from the early Prague school on the teaching of foreign languages such as English:-

The theory and practice of language teaching based on Prague linguistic principles makes full use of the contrastive (confrontational) method which was worked out by V.Mathesius in the late 'twenties ..... In language teaching, the instructor using the contrastive method makes a point of stressing, in the taught foreign language, not only those features which are identical or parallel in it with the corresponding features of the pupil's mother tongue, but also, and particularly, those features in which the two languages are found to differ ..... Both the inductive and the deductive method should be used in the process of teaching and should complement one another.

Prague linguists argued (and still argue) that such an approach can rationalize the process of teaching. To them it is clear that the mother tongue should be expected to assume a key role by supplying solid ground for the teaching process, the argument being that pupils will be able to refer to how they cope with a particular situation in their native language, and will be able to transfer that knowledge and apply it to the same situation in the foreign language. Their ability to transfer knowledge in this way can, according to Vachek (1972:25), be taken as evidence for the existence of a kind of "linguistic consciousness", comparable to Chomsky's idea of "intuition". Prague linguists consider that linguistic consciousness is fundamental to language learning and that teaching should aim to raise it: *"as a matter of fact, the existence of this linguistic consciousness or awareness appears to be the only safe ground on which the teaching of a foreign language can build ..." (ibid.)*

The Prague School did not disappear under communism, but continued to publish its ideas into the 1970s and beyond. Not surprisingly, more than 50 years of linguistic

thought has had a considerable influence on the way languages have been taught in the Czech and Slovak republics. Ideas such as the analysis of the structural components of language, the importance of the role of the mother tongue especially in contrastive analysis, the promotion of a deductive approach as well as an inductive approach to learning, and the prescribing of linguistic correctness rather than the description of linguistic variety have all filtered into accepted language teaching practices and 'traditional' language teaching methodology.

A final point to note is that the Prague linguists make much use of the term "communicative", but perhaps not quite in the way that this term is understood by present-day materials writers, teachers and teacher trainers with a UK or UK-influenced professional background. According to Vachek (1972:14) the approach favoured by the Prague School visualizes language as a tool performing different functions and that "the most outstanding (and most obvious) among these tasks is undoubtedly the *communicative* function, serving the needs and wants of the mutual understanding of individual members of the given language community". In this context "communicative" seems to be synonymous with "making oneself understood". In Chapter 2, Section 9 I will seek to demonstrate how this perspective conflicts with other 'Western' interpretations of the term, leading to unexpected misunderstandings.

1.5. Language teaching and education under communism

After World War II there was initial popular support for communist rule in Czechoslovakia, unlike in other countries in the region where communist regimes were often installed by the Red Army. In a free vote in 1946, 38% of the population supported the communists, although most of this support came from the Czechs rather than from the Slovaks (Glenn 1995). The regime which came to power in 1948 proclaimed the need for a socialist revolution, which was to affect every aspect of daily life: education was, naturally, no exception with the new Minister Of Information and Culture, Vaclav

Kopeck, insisting that "every citizen must be imbued with a new world view .. a new ideology, a new morality. The goal is to educate every citizen to thinking with all his energy and intensity of the realisation of Socialism; to the determination to defend it; to ardent love for the Soviet Union and Stalin ...". (reported by Glenn 1995:171). In other words, educational priorities had changed - political education was now a primary goal.

In the same year that the new regime came to power all private schools (meaning mainly religious schools) were abolished along with 8-year (as opposed to 4-year) *gymnazia* . In 1953 the structure of the education system was changed to conform to the Soviet model, including reducing the number of years of compulsory schooling from nine to eight years. According to Glenn (1995:171), educational aims such as preserving national traditions were dropped while courses on Marxism-Leninism were made compulsory. Russian became an obligatory language for all children from the 4th grade onwards. This meant that it replaced English or French as the foreign language to be taught in schools.

Of course, teachers were an essential part of this process of change. To ensure that they were fully committed to the new educational aims each teacher was required to swear an oath of allegiance to the Communist Party, while representatives of the party in each school made sure that the oath was kept. According to Glenn (ibid:172) "loyal communists controlled the work of the principal as well as of their colleagues". To this end they were instructed to gather selected opinions from the Pioneer and Youth organizations to bring a "view from below" regarding the teacher's work.

Structural changes in the education system did not take place overnight but were gradually adopted; the pace of change in attitudes must have been even slower. Indeed the period of liberalization in 1968 revealed that the communist regimes had not been successful in eradicating "bourgeois thoughts and attitudes" from the minds of young people and their teachers. The period of "normalization" which followed the Soviet invasion thus made it a priority to ensure that the ideological mission of schooling was

pursued with even greater vigour. Even children at nursery school were to be targeted. Meanwhile, teachers were heavily blamed because their students had been among the most enthusiastic demonstrators for reform during the "Prague Spring". Many were removed from their positions and reassigned elsewhere. Foreign language teachers of English, French and German were particularly at risk, being under suspicion of promoting "bourgeois values" imported from the West. At least one foreign language university department in Slovakia, that of the Pedagogical Faculty in Presov, was closed down and its students sent elsewhere or persuaded to change to other courses, while many of the teachers lost their positions. Among all the countries of the region Czechoslovakia was unique in the extent to which liberalization was followed by repression which was even more severe than that of earlier years.

1.6. The teaching of English under communism

By the end of the 1970s, foreign language teaching had been reduced to optional status at all state primary schools according to Jennik (1980:33). Pupils were allowed to choose from options which included games, singing, sewing, cookery, art or a foreign language such as German, English or French. The status of Russian had changed to the extent that it was almost no longer considered to be a foreign language. As has been noted previously, it was also compulsory.

At secondary level, while it was true that *gymnazia* continued to teach foreign languages in their arts stream, these schools were no longer considered to be the keystone of the education system. The vocational schools, where foreign languages were generally not taught, had taken their place in terms of prestige. According to Jennik (ibid:37) "These schools have a long tradition and in many cases are very progressive in view of the degree of social development reached". However, these schools did teach Russian: in fact Russian was a compulsory component of the school-leaving examinations for all secondary schools, including these vocational establishments. In this way the seeming

decrease in importance of the teaching of foreign languages such as English was mirrored by the ever-increasing demand for Russian.

What was it like to be an English teacher in Slovakia during this period? Individuals interviewed by Strakova (1996 unpublished) contrasted the difficulties which had to be endured on a day-to-day basis with the relative security of the teacher who followed the party line. The first problem noted by all the respondents was the lack of contact with English-speaking countries such as Britain and the USA. Most teachers had very little or no possibility of communicating with a native speaker of English, while travel to an English-speaking country was highly problematic and often depended on good socialist credentials.

As far as teaching materials were concerned there was usually very little to choose from. Most teachers used locally-produced coursebooks, but all of Strakova's respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with these, both because of their quality and because of built-in ideological elements such as texts which made unfavourable comparisons between Western English-speaking countries and communist societies.

Although foreign textbooks were normally not allowed, from the 1960s onwards some special elite language schools were allowed to operate which made use of such coursebooks as those written by L. Alexander and W.R.Lee. However, these affected a very small minority of Slovak students and few teachers were able to familiarize themselves with them. The Ministry of Education usually approved one locally-produced textbook for use in a particular type of school, and this is what most teachers of English were obliged to use.

As far as teaching methods are concerned, respondents to Strakova's survey emphasized the importance of the prescribed textbook in determining how children were taught. All of the books almost without exception promoted a grammar-translation approach to

teaching and learning: Coursebook units typically contained grammar rules explained in Slovak followed by grammar exercises, which were mostly drills. Vocabulary was explained through bilingual wordlists which were sometimes at the beginning of a unit, sometimes at the end. The teacher's task was to work through the book and to test the students orally on what they had learned. The approach, which relied heavily on analysing English structures in terms of the Slovak language, no doubt owed much to the influence of the Prague school of linguistics (see previous sections).

Because it was very unlikely that students would have to use English to any great degree, this type of approach no doubt worked very well for the generations of students educated under communist rule. According to Strakova's respondents, such an approach also enabled teachers to overcome their own limitations in spoken English. In fact the teacher's task seems to have been relatively straightforward, with a clear lesson structure provided by the coursebook, students who were generally studying English as an option and were therefore motivated, and the ability to use Slovak as a teaching aid, as and where required. The long tradition of foreign language teaching in Czechoslovakia had always acknowledged the teacher as the authority and the centre of activity in the classroom: under communism this tradition was preserved.

1.7. English language teaching in Slovakia since 1989

One of the most important educational changes in Czechoslovakia after the 1989 revolution directly affected the teaching of English. As Svecova (1995:100) puts it:

An important change concerns teaching foreign languages. Until November 1989 Russian had to be taught as the first and only obligatory foreign language in all types of schools, For most young people Russian was the only foreign language they learned at school. This led to a limited foreign language competency in the Czechoslovak population. Russian is no longer obligatory in schools.

Svecova and other authors seem to be arguing strongly not just for the relegation of Russian but also for the need to promote the teaching of other foreign languages as a priority. The implied aim is to enable young people to gain a competency in foreign languages (especially English) which will help them to contribute towards national development in the post-communist period (ibid: 92-4). Foreign languages are seen as a useful tool, rather than as an end in themselves.

After 1989, according to Svecova, 75% of basic school principals were replaced; for secondary schools the figure was 85%. (ibid:94) There are no figures available for the number of teachers who lost their jobs, particularly teachers of Russian, a subject suddenly given optional status. Similarly, there are no available figures for the number of teachers who suddenly found themselves teaching English. Of course some of these teachers were the same people: such was the demand for English teaching qualifications among former teachers of Russian that between 1990 and 1996 all teacher training establishments in Slovakia were involved in some kind of requalification programme. Demand always succeeded supply, and when these programmes were stopped (for example at Matej Bel University in Banska Bystrica in 1994 and at Presov University in 1995) there was an outcry among potential candidates.

The number of students of English in all schools grew rapidly during the period 1991-95. The table overleaf shows the total number of students then studying at different types of Slovak schools, and within these grand totals the number of those studying English, German and Russian.

Language Students at Slovak State Schools: 1991-95

	1991	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*
Basic					
English	128.512	151.148	164.837	170.451	183.062
German	161.587	185.747	198.604	207.361	209.686
Russian	94.909	59.197	40.599	36.411	34.646
TOTAL	716.416	704.119	690.189	675.813	661.082
Gymnazia					
English	44.579	52.735	58.964	63.567	68.413
German	32.981	39.237	46.680	52.050	56.901
Russian	28.669	19.800	13.324	8.678	5.231
TOTAL	59.172	63.522	68.006	72.072	76.380
Other					
English	41.196	51.853	62.172	69.094	74.969
German	36.257	47.083	56.289	65.581	70.306
Russian	30.161	17.851	11.485	11.566	10.440
TOTAL	95.195	103.793	111.664	117.145	115.083

(figures provided by SPU, Slovak Ministry of Education)

Within the 1991-5 period, while the total number of students at basic (primary) schools declined by almost 8% (due to many basic school students being absorbed into newly revived 8-year *gymnazia*), the number of students of English rose by 42%, the number of students of German by 30%, and the number of students of Russian declined by 63%.

For *gymnazia*, the corresponding figures are: student total +29%, English +53%, German +72.5%, Russian -82%; for other secondary schools: student total +21%, English +82%, German +94%, Russian -65%.

There are no comparable figures available for the increase in the number of English or German language teachers during the same period (although figures available from the Czech Republic in the 1996 OECD report, p.50, imply a substantial increase, at least at *gymnazia*). However, figures available for the 1997/98 Academic Year in Slovakia indicate what percentage of English language teachers still remain unqualified:

Type of school	*Qualified*	*Unqualified*
Basic Schools	2437	1233
Gymnazia	842	759
Vocational/Technical Schools	936	802
Apprentice Schools (SOU)	403	296

(figures provided by SPU, Slovak Ministry of Education)

Total number of English teachers for all schools: 7708
Total number of qualified teachers: 4618 (60%)
Total number of unqualified teachers: 3090 (40%)

The range of qualifications that are included in the 60% figure includes university teaching diplomas and requalification certificates, but not the accreditation certificate given to some teachers by *Metodicke Centra* on the basis of ability in spoken and written English. The remaining 40% have either this language certificate or no qualifications at all.

While the demand for English teachers has risen, the status of school teachers in the state system and pay and conditions remain depressingly low according to Svecova (1995:90):-

The present situation concerning teacher training is far from satisfactory. The social status of teachers has deteriorated steadily under the former regime and does not compare well with that of other professionals. The remuneration of teachers is so inadequate that young and talented people are not attracted to revitalise an aging teaching profession.....

It is no wonder that under these circumstances too many teachers are leaving education to go to other sectors. Those who remain are not motivated to change, but cling to old practices and obsolete conception of curricula.

These words show to what extent the recruitment of qualified and motivated teaching personnel has been regarded as problematic, whatever the subject. The increase in demand for teachers of English is clearly not going to be met as easily as it was in the 1920s. It is even uncertain whether undergraduate students who have specifically enrolled on English language teacher training courses intend to pursue a teaching career - informal interviews with currently enrolled trainees show that many have only chosen the course in order to improve their command of English, and that their intention is to find a position within industry, or as a translator, or in some other field where they will be well-paid for their English ability. Four Slovak English departments involved in teacher training at universities in Bratislava, Nitra, Banska Bystrica and Presov conducted a survey among their 1997 graduates who had been trained as English teachers. This took the form of a written questionnaire sent in the middle of the 1997-98 Academic Year to see how many of these graduates had taken up teaching posts. The results were as follows:

Complete totals (Bratislava, Nitra, Banska Bystrica, Presov)

Questionnaires sent:	221
Graduates teaching:	100
Non-teachers:	65
Failed to reply:	56

Breakdown of those teaching according to schools

Basic Schools:	23
Gymnazia:	26
Vocational/other secondary:	28

Higher education:	6
Private language schools:	14
Not known:	3
Total:	100

While the country waits for suitably qualified English teachers to take up positions in state schools, pupils must cope with the present situation, one in which underqualified and inexperienced teachers often with a poor command of the language are doing their best, receiving very little support in the process. The present situation is exacerbated by the fact that the conscription of unqualified staff or teachers qualified in another area coincides with a period of great methodological change in the teaching of English in Slovakia. The new recruits, in addition to coping with an unfamiliar subject area, must also cope with an ever-increasing influx of imported materials, methods and approaches, which often differ greatly from traditional local practice.

There are four main sources of 'new' imported ideas, which are having a significant influence on English language teaching within the state sector in Slovakia. First, textbooks and other teaching materials imported mainly from the UK, and promoted aggressively by international publishers; secondly, native speakers who have come to work in state schools, usually from the USA or from Britain; thirdly, influential international organizations and the native speaker 'experts' who they bring to Slovakia as part of ongoing educational projects; fourthly, Slovak teachers, teacher trainers and even students who spend time studying in an English-speaking country and then return to Slovakia.

So far there has been little reliable data which can indicate the extent to which imported coursebooks have replaced the locally-produced variety (apart from Prcikova 1996). But regular visits to Slovak primary or secondary schools will almost certainly reveal that coursebook series such as OUP's *"Project English"* or Longman's *"Discoveries"* are dictating the English language teaching syllabus to an ever-increasing extent. The same

titles, usually owned by two or three of the most powerful international publishers appear again and again, although, in theory at least, schools now have relative freedom of choice in deciding what materials to use. Few of the titles have been designed with the region's schools, education systems or the student's learning aims in mind. The result is that most present a diet of texts with a heavy load of British cultural information, student-centred tasks which tend to focus on listening and speaking rather than reading and writing, emphasis on the development of communicative competence rather than language knowledge, a lack of emphasis on the formal teaching of grammar, a monolingual rather than a bilingual approach to learning and so on. There is much that is new here and potentially quite alarming, particularly for the kind of teachers depicted by Svecova (above), who have been accustomed to teaching in a very different way and who (according to the same author) may be unwilling to change their approach.

A second source of new ideas and, in some cases, a newly perceived threat to local teachers are the many native speaker teachers who have come to Slovakia since 1989. Naturally, it is difficult to put many different individuals in the same category, but a profile which would match many of them would be as follows: young (ie in their twenties), American or British, enthusiastic but with little or no teaching experience, idealistic in the sense that they would like to contribute something towards the development of a new country. Many of these individuals work for voluntary organizations such as the Peace Corps or East European Partnership; some are brought to Slovakia by organizations with a strong Christian or 'democratic' agenda such as EFD (Education for Democracy). Recently, volunteer organizations, particularly those in America, have also been recruiting retired citizens, some of whom have never travelled outside their own country before and some of whom have never taught before. At the same time , there is evidence that there is also an increasing number of English language teachers (mostly British) with a little ELT training, who are coming out to Slovakia because of lack of employment opportunities elsewhere.

Such a mix of individuals has clearly had a number of different effects on the teaching of English in Slovakia. At an early stage, in 1989 and 1990, all were made welcome and were able to choose where they wanted to work, such was the demand for contact with native speakers - any native speaker. Many schools were then disappointed when they realized that the native speaker teacher in fact knew little about teaching, and many Slovak teachers found themselves in the (to them) surprising position of having to train their native-speaker counterparts. However, the native speaker teachers still had a strong advantage: Slovak teachers still felt that the native speakers ,whatever their lack of training and whatever their ignorance of the local teaching context, because of their spoken and written ability in English were still better models for students to emulate. Interestingly enough, a survey conducted by Thomas (1995:30) showed that their pupils did not agree with this assessment; nevertheless, till the present day, the presence of native speaker teachers in Slovak schools has often seemed threatening to teachers who fear that they will be compared linguistically and will be found wanting. An article by Medvecky (1995) and a reply from McFarren, an American native-speaker teacher (1996) highlight the difficulties experienced by both groups of teachers in establishing an effective working relationship. Medvecky, who describes the experience of taking over a class from a native-speaker colleague, expresses his concern about the students' level of accuracy, while being impressed by their fluency in English. McFarren in her reply calls on Slovak teachers of English to be less deferential to native speakers and more supportive when they need help.

The third source of 'new' ideas has been through international projects and organizations such as the British Council, United States Information Service and the Fulbright Commission. After 1989, when Czechoslovakia suddenly opened itself to the outside world, it had to cope with a flood of 'experts' and specialists in many different fields, all wanting to contribute to the development of the new post-communist societies. There were many different reasons for this involvement, some more altruistic than others. In this respect writers such as Phillipson (1992) and Pennycook (1994) have taken Western

organizations, particularly the British Council, to task, accusing them of self-centred exploitation. It is my belief that such an assessment is too simplistic (and perhaps also too harsh) and that projects set up by organizations such as the British Council have had worthy (as well as purely economic) aims. There is no doubt that Slovak educational institutions have benefited from the exchange of ideas with specialists recruited by international organizations who have worked mainly as lecturers or teacher trainers in university departments, schools and *Metodicke Centra.* Much needed material resources have been provided too, especially through the British Council regional Resource Centres. EEC funded programmes such as Tempus and Phare have also brought language teaching specialists, equipment and other resources to Slovakia.

There is of course a great danger here that the native speaker 'expert', who may have little experience of the local educational context, will enthusiastically provide ideas and solutions to problems which may be unsuitable for reasons which are unknown to her/him. This is what seems to have happened in many cases. The often uncritical respect which has been accorded to the native speaker 'expert', together with a tendency not to question decisions made by a higher authority, has often meant the introduction of new teaching or teacher training programmes which may not be best suited to exploiting existing resources and addressing existing aims. Changes have tended to be piecemeal with, for example, a proposed change in English language teaching materials to reflect a more 'communicative' approach not being matched by a change in end-of-course assessment systems with a strong focus on the testing of grammatical knowledge. The result has been a conflict of ideas and approaches, reflected in both the teaching of language and the training of language teachers.

It is also significant that conferences such as the 1992 Tonkovce seminar "ELT in Slovakia - Past, Present and Future" have tended to be dominated as much by temporarily resident native speakers as by the representatives of teaching organizations such as SAIA and SAUA/SATE. The first conference to discuss the implementation of a "fast-track"

programme for producing new teachers of English in a shorter programme than the standard 5 year degree was held at Matej Bel University Department of English, but was organized by two British Council native speaker specialists. At every level where decisions are taken, while it is desirable that there should be a range of opinions, it is clearly undesirable that native speakers should set the agenda in this way.

The final source of new ideas has been that of Slovak teachers themselves, who have spent a period abroad in an English-speaking country, and who return with new ideas and approaches to teaching, which they have often seen working in an English-speaking environment. Study programmes financed by Tempus/Phare or by the British Council/USIS have provided some of these opportunities, but there are also many cases of enterprising teachers paying their own way. Sometimes, too, their students prove to be even more adventurous with year-long stays in Britain or America financed by their own work: it is arguable that the opinions of these individuals can also contribute indirectly to the introduction of new ideas, since their Slovak teachers feel the need to change their approach just to stay one step ahead.

Whatever the origin of new ideas and the educational change which they seek to bring about, it can be clearly demonstrated that there is great potential for conflict when they come into contact with those of longer-established traditional practice. This research project aims to describe the different forms which this conflict can take and to explain the potential effects of educational change on the teaching profession in Slovakia.

1.8. English language teaching looking to the future

On January 1st 1993 the Slovak Republic came into being having formally split with its Czech partner in the former Czechoslovakia. The reaction in Slovakia was initially one of shock that such a decisive step could have been taken so easily with little public consultation and very little debate. Slovak citizens had to adjust to the idea that Prague was no longer the capital city and that a new government had been installed in Bratislava

with the nationalist politician, Vladimir Meciar, as its Prime Minister. While many other politicians were slowly adjusting to the change in circumstances and the new opportunities which had arisen, Meciar and his party, the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS), gradually strengthened their political control, and succeeded in imposing their nationalist agenda until after the general elections of 1998 when a change of government finally took place.

During the 1993-98 period many HZDS policies angered countries in the West as well as people in Slovakia, with the government being accused by its critics of encouraging ethnic tensions between Slovaks and neighbouring Hungarians, wielding excessive control over the media, violating the Slovak constitution in different ways, and filling every walk of life with political appointees. Various laws were enacted, such as the 1994 language law prescribing the exclusive use of Slovak in certain contexts, which other countries regarded as restrictions on human rights. As a result, at the time of writing, it seems that Slovakia is certain to be overlooked as a possible candidate for membership of Nato and the EEC during the next wave of new memberships, when the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland are expected to be invited to join.

People in Slovakia have had mixed reactions to events which have taken place since 1993 and this uncertainty is reflected in their attitude to outsiders and ideas imported from abroad. On the one hand, most Slovaks are nationalistic to the extent that they feel proud to be part of a country separate from the Czech republic and able to decide their own destiny. But many people also fear that nationalism could quickly turn into xenophobia and a rejection of all things foreign and that this process is already taking place. The 1994 language law, for example, decrees that all foreign films, including Czech films, must now be subtitled in Slovak. Most Slovaks have no difficulty in understanding spoken Czech and many fear that the gradual adoption of such seemingly anti-foreign legislation will begin to have its effect.

There has also been a good deal of political turmoil in the country since 1993 with Meciar and the Slovak President Kovac involved in a bitter dispute for power. Political antagonism has absorbed the energies of the country's leaders, while at the same time political appointees have often taken the place of more able personnel in specialized posts. This has been particularly true of the education system where inertia rather a desire for reform seems to have taken hold. While the Czech Republic has been addressing the need for a new school curriculum (OECD report 1996) to replace the communist model and looking outside its own borders for new ideas, Slovakia still has no definitive syllabus in any subject and is ambivalent about the help which it is receiving from other countries. In the case of language teaching, the fact that foreign organizations are willing to invest money in that particular area of the education system seems to have had the effect of diverting much government funding away to other subject areas. Since 1993 there have also been frequent changes in the Education Ministry (including 4 different ministers), which have made any sort of continuity or coherence of policy problematic.

Until decisions are made at a national level, any changes in the education system will affect only one small area, one subject, or schools in one particular region. Schools are being asked to provide their own syllabus for foreign languages such as English and to prepare their own school-leaving examinations. Universities also have their own individualized entrance examinations in different subjects, which are unconnected with the *maturita* taken by school-leavers.

The present situation is one of freedom of choice, but also one of potential anarchy. The void in the English language syllabus is mostly being filled by textbook-driven courses; these textbooks tend more and more to be imported from the UK and published by one of three major international publishers, who sometimes through intelligent marketing succeed in selling coursebooks which are considered out-of-date or unsuccessful elsewhere.

The situation for teachers seeking guidance or support amidst such confusion is even more difficult. *Metodicke Oddelenie* (methodology centres), which had the main responsibility for in-service training and teacher development at primary level, were closed by national decree in 1996. *Metodicke Centra,* which serve only secondary level schools, still survive but with depleted staff (mostly administrators) and resources. In English language teaching, foreign organizations such as the British Council with native speaker teacher trainers have stepped in offering limited support programmes for teachers. Experienced Slovak teachers can also act as part-time teacher trainers, but they remain teachers working for one particular school or university department; there are no individuals who are paid just to be full-time teacher trainers.

For young teachers just starting their careers after completing degree courses with a teacher-training component the situation is also problematic. Teacher graduates from university Philosophical faculties tend to have received very little practical training for their future career, with language teaching methodology being taught very much as a body of knowledge rather than a set of skills. Meanwhile, graduates from Pedagogical faculties, although less likely to have been subjected to such a theoretical approach, are frustrated by the lack of teaching practice integrated into their courses, as well as the uncooperativeness of poorly-paid teaching practice mentors in local schools. Thus, in a context of unpredictability and rapid change, there is inadequate provision for teacher support at every level. The result is that many teachers are left to cope with change as best as they can and to find individual solutions to problems which are shared by many of their colleagues.

Looking to the future, it is possible (based on the few available present day statistics) to make certain predictions in the field of ELT, which have a direct relevance to this research project. It seems certain that the demand for foreign language teaching will continue to grow, with the rate of growth for English being higher than for German; at the same time the demand for Russian will continue to decline (see figures p.25). In spite

of an increase in the number of teacher trainees, it is expected that there will be a continued shortage of qualified teaching staff to meet this demand for foreign language teaching, with many trained English teaching graduates preferring to work outside the education sector in areas where they can command better terms and conditions. Foreign organizations such as the British Council and USIS will tend to reduce their commitment in terms of personnel and resources; at the same time the commercial activities of international publishers will increase as they market a wider range of imported coursebooks.

The scenario presented by these predictions is one in which teachers of English in Slovakia will face increasingly complex demands within a context of rapid educational change, as well as potential conflicts of ideas, making the profession far less predictable than it was under communism or in the immediate post-communist period. This research project aims to analyse the new challenges that face teachers and will seek to point the way towards possible solutions to the problematic effects of change which they now face.

CHAPTER 2: ISSUES OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

2.1. The process of change and the role of the teacher

This chapter looks at the accounts of writers from various disciplines concerning the process of change in the field of education. In it I will seek to demonstrate that the effects of change, seen from the perspective of change recipients, have seemingly been under-reported. The relationship between cultural and ideological practices inherent in educational systems and the change process will be emphasized, as will the potential for conflict when different cultures and ideologies meet. Furthermore, I will argue that individual teachers face a dilemma as both recipients and designated agents of change. From examples of the implementation of various ELT projects, which aim to promote a more 'communicative' approach to language teaching, I will also seek to demonstrate that the mismatch between educational planning and implementation described by Bowers (1983) and other writers is very often the result of misunderstandings which occur because of different cultural and ideological interpretations of key concepts. Finally, I will argue that the lessons learned from unsuccessful innovations provide useful pointers towards collaborative solutions to specific problems, which in turn may have important implications for teacher development initiatives.

It is necessary at the outset to distinguish between the idea of *change* and that of *innovation.* Although these terms are often used indiscriminately or "interchangeably" (Markee 1997:47), many writers stress the importance of making a clear distinction between them. Nicholls (1983:4) suggests that change can be seen as *"a continuous reappraisal and improvement of existing practice and which can be regarded as part of the normal activity of curriculum development".*

Innovation, on the other hand, is:-

.... an idea, object, or practice perceived as new by an individual or individuals, which is intended to bring about improvement in relation to desired objectives, which is fundamental in nature and which is planned and deliberate. (ibid:4)

According to White (1987:211) *Innovation is more than change, although all innovation involves change. Whereas all organizations necessarily change over time, innovation is planned and deliberate; it is intended to bring about improvements, and it is fundamental in nature. Importantly, innovation is perceived as new by all.*

Markee (1997:47) argues that such distinctions are often unclear to those who are actually involved in the process of some kind of educational change. For example, teachers invited to adopt a new or innovative approach to developing their students' speaking skills may argue that this is the way they have always taught. More often, a measure regarded as highly innovative initially, may be judged over time to be not so new after all. This point of view seems to contradict not only the idea that an innovation must be "perceived as new by all", but also question the notion of being "fundamental in nature". One person's perception of fundamental change may not be shared by others; in practice, what this may mean is that a change regarded as fundamental by educational planners may not be accepted as such by the recipients of change - teachers and their students.

It may thus be argued that attempting to draw a clear distinction between the two concepts is problematic and that this raises the question of how to use the terms *change* and *innovation* in the rest of this chapter. The term *innovation,* from now on will refer to planned and deliberate educational reform, which is limited in scope in some definable way. This type of measure taken by educational power-brokers can be clearly contrasted with the ongoing process of *educational change*, which may contain a greater or lesser element of planning, and which has no clearly-defined limit or instigators. Although much of the literature focusses on innovation, and in particular the planning and implementation of innovation (Nicholls 1983, White 1987 etc.), it is educational change

of the more haphazard variety, and the perspective of the recipient of change rather than that of the educational planner, which is the main focus of this research project.

A further problem with much of the literature on educational change, both within and outside the context of ELT, is that it appears to regard the individual teacher as an obstacle to change rather than a key element in the change process. White et al. (1991:166), for example, argue:

Yet another problem concerns the teachers themselves. They share a common professional background and they claim a measure of autonomy in the teaching/learning process. Indeed, such autonomy is often built into the system and may even be guaranteed by legislation. As professionals, teachers expect and may even demand participation (and at very least consultation) within the decision-making process.

This view appears to suggest that there is a conflict between decision-making concerning desirable educational change and the professional freedom enjoyed by many teachers - "the autonomy of the teacher and the fragmentation of school organization tend to go hand in hand" (ibid:167). It is based on the perception of two different viewpoints concerning educational change: that of the *change agent* and that of the *receiver of change* (ibid:.179) with the teacher playing the recipient role . However, according to Sikes (1992:36), the situation is much more complex since:

Teachers are in the rather strange position of being simultaneously both the subject and the agent of change .... They are required to change themselves and what they do to meet specifications laid down by policy makers who neither know them or the contexts in which they work.

This dual role means that teachers often have greater power to affect educational change than they may think. As Fullan (1991:117) puts it: "Educational change depends on what teachers do and think - it's as simple and as complex as that". Fullan's comment can be seen as one of the underlying ideas within this research project. Educational change depends on teachers, not just as recipients, but also as instigators.

2.2. The effects of educational change on individuals and organizations

When compared to the attention given to planning and implementing change, it seems that the literature concerning the effects of change is relatively sparse. Holliday (1994:104), for example, laments the lack of reporting on the effects of introducing communicative methodology into state education systems in countries such as Morocco and Egypt. Other writers express similar concerns with reference to other specific teaching contexts (eg Karavas-Doukas 1995, Greece).

Rogers, (1971:371), prefers to talk about "consequences of change" rather than "effects" arguing that:

In spite of the importance of consequences, they have received very little study by diffusion researchers.. Further, the data that we have about consequences are rather "soft" in nature ...

What really concerned Rogers at the time of writing was the lack of rigour apparently shown by many researchers in seeking to make generalizations concerning the effects of change from isolated case studies. At the same time, he recognized that "perhaps the usual survey methods are inappropriate for the investigation of innovation consequences" (ibid:377), suggesting the use of anthropological approaches such as participant observation instead. The fact that such approaches were considered unusual at the time of writing (compared with the situation today) partly explains the relative scarcity of studies on the consequences/effects of innovations and the laments of Holliday and other writers. It would be a challenging task indeed to attempt to collect the kind of "hard" data preferred by Rogers in order to be able to make valid generalizations about the effects of educational change.

Another reason, according to Rogers, for the lack of studies concerning the consequences of change is "pro-innovation bias" (ibid:377):

Change agencies, often the sponsors of diffusion research, overemphasize adoption per se, tacitly assuming that the consequences of innovation decisions will be positive.

This is a potentially serious concern, echoed by Phillipson (1992: 233), who claims that 'aid' activities such as curriculum development and teacher training rather than research have "tied up much of the available professional energy, and diverted attention away from fundamental questions". Phillipson argues the need for ELT to question its most basic assumptions and to study their effects in different teaching contexts:

There is in the profession a general ethos of reformism ..... and an urge to innovate and extend theory development, but these may leave some more underlying issues, structural and ideological, unexplored (ibid:233)

Phillipson is suggesting that "the urge to innovate" often overrides the need for serious research into why such innovations are needed in the first place. He compares the modest size of the research effort with the huge 'aid' effort in ELT, consisting of countless curriculum development and teacher training projects. He adds that "research which could query the whole basis of 'aid' activity might be unwelcome to those responsible for 'aid' policy" (ibid:234) He concludes that such attitudes raise issues of *cultural imperialism* (see section 4); for example, research into the effects of exporting university textbooks to developing countries might well prove an embarrassment to the exporters of 'aid'. The result is a distinct unwillingness on the part of instigators of change to seriously examine the consequences of their actions, or to consider fundamental issues such as the influence of local cultural values (ibid:262).

Pennycook (1994: 176) explores further the consequences of such inertia:

... The global export of English, English language teaching, and English textbooks frequently leads to situations of cultural conflict where the norms presented in the texts are in direct conflict with local social and cultural norms.

In other words, English language teaching is never neutral, a view shared by this research project. Decisions taken by those who have the power to instigate change can not be made in a kind of cultural, social or ideological vacuum. According to Pennycook (ibid:178) " Teaching practices, techniques, approaches, methods are cultural practices." The next sections of this chapter will examine the implications of this comment and its relevance to the processes of educational change.

2.3. The concept of culture

Various writers have pointed out the problematic and complex nature of the concept of culture. Williams (1976:87) goes so far as to say that 'culture' may be considered to be one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language. Originally used as a noun of *process,* as in the culture (cultivation) of crops, the meaning of the word was gradually extended in the nineteenth century to embrace a range of meanings from (1) *a developed state of mind* - as in "a person of culture", (2) *the processes of this development* - as in "cultural interests", to (3) *the means of these processes* - as in culture as 'the arts' and 'humane intellectual works'. Williams (1981:11) maintains that popular usage tends to favour the third interpretation, often referred to as 'high culture', but that this coexists uneasily with twentieth-century anthropological and sociological interpretations, which point to the much broader concept of culture as a 'whole way of life' of a distinct people or other social group.

For Reynolds & Skilbeck (1976:71) it is now actually misleading to equate 'culture' with 'high culture' because :

Culture is essentially process. Its understanding requires us to examine the meanings which men develop in and through social interaction. Thus conceived, culture is in no way distinctive of any one group or class in society, and to talk of 'high' culture is to talk of only one cultural subset.

Similarly, a convergence of interpretations is commented on by Williams (1976:13) and Stuart Hall (1980), who has coined the phrase 'maps of meaning' to describe the idea of culture as a process within which meanings are generated and circulated within different societies. The idea is that most modern societies might be expected to contain a multiplicity of 'cultures' in this sense, with people belonging to and adapting to different cultural groups using their own maps to 'read' the same events, objects and people in quite different ways.

It can also be argued that culture is not just a process but an inherently *political* process in which different social groups vie to impose their interpretations of the world and that some social groups are more successful than others in this respect becoming able to impose a *hegemony,* - in other words through the various institutions they dominate, they can produce and accumulate meanings which are favourable to their interests. The culture of the dominant group may be contested by various subcultures or countercultures, but for the status quo to be maintained it will need to have the *consent* of other groups within the same society, who regard it as the natural order of things. The idea of the concept of hegemony is attributed to Antonio Gramsci, who in turn is reputed to have acknowledged Lenin as its originator (Hall et al.1986:49).

In the Eastern and Central European context, the idea of culture as a set of imposed hegemonic values is inevitably equated with the 'culture' of Marxism-Leninism (Karsten and Majoor 1994). But it may be argued that sets of values underlying concepts such as 'modernization' or 'democracy' can equally be considered as examples of specific cultures in this sense - it might be possible to speak of "the culture of democracy", for example, when referring to the underlying values of certain educational organizations such as "Education for Democracy", an American organization which sends volunteer teachers to the Eastern and Central European region. If we accept the extension of the concept of culture to cover this type of example, it is clear that at this point culture and the concept of ideology seem very close indeed. The fact that we might equally wish to

talk of "the ideology of democracy", when applied to an Eastern/Central European context, indicates the difficulty of separating the two (see also section 5).

Because our understanding of culture can be so easily bound up with the values of dominant groups , it is sometimes wrongly assumed that cultural differences affect only large groups of people. This view of the world juxtaposes 'British culture' with 'French culture', for example and seeks to compare and contrast what are assumed to be two clearly identifiable concepts. Similarly, 'Western cultures' and 'Non-western cultures' are often referred to as if a meaningful geographical line could be drawn between East and West, with 'cultures' on either side of the divide showing clearly-defined traits. Such a viewpoint is bound to produce a world of vague and not very useful stereotypes leading to misleading generalizations about cultural differences affecting large groups of people.

Pennycook (1994:62), seems to summarize all of the ideas discussed so far when he identifies four broad interpretations of the concept of culture, namely "culture as a set of superior values, especially embodied in works of art and limited to a small elite" (in other words, 'high culture'); "culture as a whole way of life, the informing spirit of a people" (the anthropological/sociological broad interpretation); "culture as a set of values imposed on the majority by those in power" (the political/hegemonic interpretation); and "culture as the way in which different people make sense of their lives" (the 'maps of meaning' interpretation).

The final interpretation of culture as "the way in which people make sense of their lives" is perhaps the most fruitful for the purposes of this research project for two reasons: firstly, because it appears to refer to individual people and small groups (and not just broader population categories) , and secondly, because it provides us with a more dynamic view of the concept. With respect to the first point, Pennycook emphasizes the dangers inherent in looking at issues of culture without a local perspective (1994:65) and seems to reflect also the opinion of Bourdieu (1971:190) who maintains that:

Culture is not merely a common code or even a common catalogue of answers to recurring problems; it is a common set of previously assimilated master patterns from which, by an 'art of invention' similar to that involved in the writing of music, an infinite number of individual patterns directly applicable to specific situations are generated.

What this writer seems to be saying is not so much that individuals can form their own cultures but that through "individual patterns generated to suit specific situations", educational organizations (for example) and different groups of teachers and learners can develop their own distinct cultures, their own shared 'maps of meaning' which will help them to interpret their particular situation within the constraints of a wider cultural context. With respect to the second point, Street (1993:23) goes a step further in rejecting the notion of "a fixed inheritance of shared meanings" within the wider context, for a more dynamic interpretation of culture as "the active construction of meaning" by individuals and groups of individuals. Culture is no longer reified, but seen as a process: "culture is a verb." (ibid.)

It is this less static, more dynamic interpretation of the concept of culture which should be understood within the educational context of this research project report. Culture is seen to be an active agent, constantly assisting individuals (including teachers) in the task of making sense of their lives and experiences, and of defining them through language: "We all live our lives in terms of definitions, names and categories that culture creates" (Street 1993:25). The opposing view of cultures as monolithic and seemingly unchanging entities, sometimes implied by the anthropological perspective of "a whole way of life" is rejected within an educational context, and statements made by writers proposing broader fixed categories such as 'national cultures' challenged, with the idea of 'culture' in this sense being firmly placed between inverted commas.

Is it possible in some way to categorize the different cultures with which an individual may be actively associated ? Writers such as Holliday (1994:22) have attempted this by

considering a hierarchy of different kinds of meaningful cultures to which individuals can belong. According to this point of view, the apparent 'broad cultures' of 'whole societies' can be broken down into those of 'sections of societies', such as class cultures, religious cultures, urban and rural cultures. There are 'the cultures of specific activities' such as organizational cultures within a context of management, and school and teacher cultures within a context of education. It is possible to break down these interpretations even further: for example one school might easily contain more than one 'teacher culture' (cf Fullan 1991, Hargreaves 1994). It is quite easy to imagine, say, the emergence of distinct cultures for newly-qualified teachers vs highly-experienced teachers, native speaker teachers vs non-native speaker teachers or English language vs English literature teachers. This process of breaking down larger into smaller cultural units does indeed seem to generate "an infinite number of individual patterns" (Bourdieu 1971) and at each level of the hierarchy individuals can connect to the different 'cultures' to which they can claim membership. It can even be argued that each individual language learning classroom may be said to develop its own unique culture in so far as each group of learners may create their own distinctive but shared way of "making sense of their lives" within the specific learning context. At this end of such a hierarchy, a culture does indeed seem to involve 'the active construction of meaning' for those who claim membership of it; at the other extreme, in arguing for, say, the existence of a shared *international professional culture* associated with a discipline such as *applied linguistics* (see section 2.6. for further discussion of this), it is much harder to claim active and meaningful involvement for individuals.

2.4. Classroom practices as cultural practices

To the extent that what takes place in the classroom can be seen as a result of tacit understandings and ongoing dialogue between participants representing the interests of different cultural groups, it can be argued that classroom practices can be seen as cultural practices. The acceptance of this argument also entails acceptance of the 'non-neutrality' of teaching and learning (Pennycook 1994:178). The extreme version of the

argument can lead to charges of *cultural imperialism* when the ideas of one educational culture are perceived as being imposed on those of another. Pennycook appears to sympathize with this view in which the language class becomes a kind of cultural battleground:

As applied linguists, often with the aid of agencies such as the British Council, spread their views of language teaching as scientific, modern, new, better, and so on, they make of the classroom a site of cultural politics, in which battles over social and cultural practices are fought within the context of English language teaching. This is true of both the content and process of teaching. (ibid:168)

Phillipson (1992:58), quoting Schiller (1976:9) suggests that cultural imperialism can be analysed as *"the sum of processes by which a society is brought into the modern world system and how its dominating stratum is attracted, pressured, forced, and sometimes bribed into shaping social institutions to correspond to, or even promote, the values of the dominating center of the system".*

Phillipson goes on to suggest that there is such a thing as *educational imperialism*, involving the transfer of products such as textbooks, examinations as well as teaching methods and approaches from one educational culture to another in such as way as to impose them or make them indispensable. A common tactic for achieving this is, he suggests, to include them as essential parts of aid packages from one country to another.

Is it possible that the combined forces of cultural and educational imperialism are being felt as strongly as these writers suggest and that the classroom has become a cultural and/or ideological battleground? In order to answer this question we will need to reach an explanation of how different types of educational cultures work, and then consider how susceptible they are to outside influences at a surface and at a deeper level. The following example will serve to illustrate these points.

Holliday (1994:4) claims that there is a clear distinction between the educational cultures of private sector students (studying in language schools all over the world) and those

studying in the state sector of primary and secondary schools, universities and colleges of further education, which relies on a very different educational model. Referring to the state sector institutions, he suggests that they are non-commercial in orientation and have a clientele for whom English may not have such a clearly instrumental purpose - a view which may be generally acceptable if we look at the educational context of countries such as Slovakia, but disputed if we consider the recent development of ELT in state sector institutions within the UK.

To examine the nature of the different needs of learners and their teachers in such contexts, it is useful, as Holliday suggests, to refer to categories first put forward by Bernstein (1971:49-55), who argued that educational knowledge can be framed within a curriculum in two distinct ways: when the contents are "clearly bounded and insulated from each other" the curriculum is labelled *collectionist,* whereas when "the contents do not go their own separate ways" but "stand in an open relation to each other" they can be described as *integrationist.* A collectionist curriculum, (and by implication a collectionist culture), contains specialization in individual subjects. A language learner following this type of curriculum at tertiary level might study English grammar, British and American literature, writing skills in English as separate subjects. Each may form the content of a separate course, in which case each will nearly always be taught and examined separately. At secondary and even primary levels there might not be as clear a separation into distinct courses, but it will still be common for secondary level students (at least) to prepare for an examination in English grammar or vocabulary, or have their knowledge of 'British or American culture' tested in a similar way. Such are the requirements of state education in many countries (typically in the Eastern and Central European region) and a collectionist curriculum seems to be an appropriate model to serve them.

It is not surprising that, according to Holliday (1994:73), teachers in state education in many countries tend to favour a collectionist approach, at least at tertiary level. In teacher

training, he notes that "language teaching methodology often becomes a discipline in its own right, and is taught as a highly formalised content subject" - a body of knowledge rather than a set of teaching skills to be acquired by trainees.

In primary and secondary schools, teachers of English, while (in some ways) still favouring a collectionist approach, are likely to look for practical ideas from integrationist sources. An integrationist curriculum, typified by the ends-means model based on learner needs (cf Auerbach 1995:13), will tend to forgo the more rigid structuring of the collectionist model with its emphasis on the authority of the specialist teacher. It will tend to emphasize the importance of skills development rather than the acquisition of specialized knowledge, experiential rather than content-based learning and 'democracy' in the classroom rather than autocracy. Most significantly, integrationist thinking underlies many of the materials, methods and approaches which originate in the UK and North America and are exported to educational institutions in both the state and private sector around the world.

The integrationist approach and culture, with its emphasis on 'democratic values', may on the surface appear to offer more flexibility to language teachers and their students. However, in practice, according to Bernstein (1971:60):-

The integrated code will not permit variations in pedagogy and evaluation which are possible in collection codes. On the contrary, I suggest there will be a pronounced movement towards a common pedagogy and tendency towards a common system of evaluation.

The authority and autonomy of the teacher within the collectionist tradition allows for a degree of methodological freedom which is not as freely available within the seemingly more liberal integrationist model. Bernstein suggests that the latter demands a more rigid pedagogical orthodoxy. A good illustration of this would be the strong emphasis within the integrationist tradition on the values of communicative language teaching (see

sections 7 & 9 for examples of this). Teachers working in the state sectors of education in countries such as Slovakia are thus forced into an unwanted situation of conflict, which requires them to have to address the problem of how to reconcile the demands of two very different educational cultures. The integrationist and collectionist traditions can in some respects also be seen as being strongly influenced by different *educational ideologies*, an idea to which we now turn.

2.5. Classroom practices as ideological practices

If it is accepted that classroom practices may be deemed to have a significant cultural content, do they also contain an ideological element? In this context how might cultural and ideological practices differ and what are the implications of this distinction? To answer these questions it is first necessary to examine some general definitions of the concept of 'ideology'.

Eagleton (1991:3-4) contrasts 'commonsense' perceptions of ideology which imagine "some rigid framework of preconceived ideas" with the observation that "there is no such thing as pressuppositionless thought, and to this extent all of our thinking might be said to be ideological". He also contrasts a *narrow* view of ideology, according to which it is concerned with legitimizing the power of a dominant social group or class, with the *broader* perspective in which ideological beliefs can be seen to be separated from power-holding (and possibly even power-seeking):-

Not every body of belief which people commonly term ideological is associated with a dominant political power. The political left, in particular, tends almost instinctively to think of such dominant modes when it comes to the topic of ideology; but what then do we call the beliefs of the Levellers, Diggers, Narodniks and Suffragettes, which were certainly not the governing value systems of their day? Are socialism and feminism ideologies, and if not why not? (ibid:6)

Apple (1990:21-22) argues that whoever is dominant, power is always a central issue when the question of ideology is raised, and that in an educational context there is a close

connection between the concepts of ideology and of hegemony. Education can never be a 'neutral' experience, whether in cultural or ideological terms: knowledge can be said to pass through a kind of 'ideological filter'. According to Apple (ibid.: 51) the "deep structure" of school experience underlying the formal curriculum content (the "curriculum in use") sustains social norms and ideological rules, some of which are unconsciously held, and which establish the bounds of what is permissible and help to prevent ideological conflict. This last point is important: although it can be argued that "conflicts are the systematic products of the changing structure of a society and by their very nature tend to lead to progress" (ibid.:97), nevertheless the basic rules that govern our own ideological perception cause us to picture conflict as primarily negative (see section 8).

According to Dendrinos (1992: 77-78), the concept of ideology seems to be disconnected from the question of power relations since it "refers to a system of key beliefs, held by members of a group, that direct their actions and processes in some areas of life." She considers that an 'educational ideology' could describe "a system of beliefs that gives general direction to the educational policies and activities of those who hold these beliefs." She adds that the concept can also be considered to include attitudes and values as well as beliefs.

Such a definition tends to confuse the thin boundary-line between what can be included within the concept of 'culture' and that of 'ideology' and does not really help in addressing the question of whether classroom practices can be said to be ideological as well as cultural. Reynolds and Skilbeck (1976:76-78) are more helpful in this respect. For them an ideology is a "system or a cluster of beliefs and values held by social groups which help to bind those groups together and are used by them to further their own interests". They also attempt to define the concept of ideology as it relates to that of culture (and vice versa), arguing that "within a given culture there may be a number of competing and conflicting ideologies at work" and that "culture will be viewed and interpreted from

within particular ideological frameworks". (ibid.)

These ideas succeed at least in contrasting the broader anthropological/sociological interpretation of culture as "'the whole way of a life" of a people or distinct social group with the idea of ideology as a framework through which this cultural experience can be interpreted. As Eagleton (1991: 14-15) states, for ideologies to be effective, they must make at least some minimal sense of people's experience and must conform with their perceptions of social reality. From this point of view culture *is* the everyday reality which people live, while ideology makes sense of this reality, helping human beings to order their view of the world.

Coming back to the question of whether classroom practices can be considered ideological as well as cultural, Fairclough (1989:33) argues that power is the key to differentiating between culture and ideology:-

Institutional practices which people draw upon without thinking often embody assumptions which directly or indirectly legitimize existing power relations. Practices which appear universal and commonsensical can often be shown to originate in the dominant class or the dominant bloc, and to have become naturalized Where types of practice, and in many cases types of discourse, function in this way to sustain unequal power relations, I shall say they are functioning ideologically. (Fairclough 1989:33)

This image of unconscious rather than conscious beliefs, which maintain the balance of power relations is echoed by other writers. (eg Skilbeck & Harris 1976:42). The Marxist interpretation of ideology as 'false consciousness', by means of which, for example, workers believe that the upper classes have a right to exploit them (this being the way of the world) appears to be the kind of thinking that is being followed here.

At a more everyday level, Auerbach (1995: 12), describes how even the most straightforward classroom practices can have ideological implications. Where the teacher stands or sits, the kind of questions which she asks, the way she evaluates learners'

progress and countless other activities all give the observer clues as to the teacher's unstated (and perhaps unconscious) beliefs about teaching and learning. Power relations underlie and are maintained by the daily routine of the classroom. Beliefs, whether conscious and 'close to the surface' or unconscious and more deep-seated are reinforced by this process. The cycle is only broken when a different ideology implying different power relations intrudes on this scene.

It can be argued that all aspects of teaching are inherently ideological. Auerbach reasons that:-

Pedagogical choices about curriculum development, content, materials, classroom processes, and language use, although appearing to be informed by apolitical professional considerations, are, in fact, inherently ideological in nature... (1995:9)

If pedagogical choices such as these depend on different educational ideologies, is it possible to classify such ideologies in some way? Skilbeck & Harris (1976) and Clark (1987) set out to address this question:

There is a powerful tradition or set of traditions in education which illustrate how values, cultural contexts, practical experience, research findings and various intellectual movements combine to produce educational theory. What might be termed the pedagogical community has generated its own ideologies without necessarily having recourse to prevailing political-economic-social ideologies - or to research .....
(Skilbeck & Harris 1976: 23)

These authors identify three different examples of educational thinking, which they claim have arisen in this way: the ideologies of classical humanism, progressivism and reconstructionism. Skilbeck & Harris warn that the terms need to be treated with caution, since there is no claim that they are capable of subsuming the whole of educational theory. However, each is seen to be a powerful ideology in its own right, representing "a comprehensive and well-articulated position" (ibid:24).

Clark (1987:91) summarizes the general properties of these three different educational ideologies, or 'value systems' (ibid.) as follows:

- Classical humanism is elitist, concerned with generalizable intellectual capacities and with the transmission of knowledge, culture and standards from one generation to another
- Reconstructionism is concerned with bringing about social change through the educational system, with achieving a social consensus on common goals, and with planning vigorously to achieve them
- Progressivism is concerned with the development of the individual as a whole person, with personal and group responsibility, with promoting natural learning processes through various stages of development, and with fostering a capacity for learning how to learn

Since these descriptions are referred to by other writers (eg Dendrinos 1992) and are associated with particular types of ELT curriculum design, materials and methods (Clark 1987: 91-107), they will provide a useful point of reference when we come to examine the conflict which can occur when different educational cultures and ideologies meet. In particular, looking at the specific context of this research project, it might be argued that all three ideologies are present in some form. Reconstructionism would then correspond to the educational ideology promoted through communism in the East and Central European region, if we accept the suggestion of Skilbeck and Harris (1976:34) that it contains "the aspiration to make a new kind of man, especially a new kind of citizen, 'better' and more effective than the average present-day system.". Classical humanism might correspond to the ideology which it replaced in schools in the region, and which has seemingly survived the communist era. A progressivist ideology, on the other hand, with its emphasis on the individual and the development of the 'whole person' is now, according to this interpretation of events, being promoted by the 'new' imported language teaching methodologies. One version of what is taking place might be that skills-based communicative language teaching, with its progressivist emphasis on 'student-centred' learning and associations with the idea of 'learner autonomy', is in open conflict with a grammar-translation or structural knowledge-based classical humanist

approach, which follows the tradition that has been dominant throughout most of the history of education of the region.

To summarize, the demise of communism has also meant the demise of an imposed 'reconstructionist' ideology in countries such as Slovakia. It is one of the tasks of this research project to examine the conflict between the different types of educational ideologies which seek to fill the vacuum which has been created. The next sections consider this type of conflict and its effects in greater detail.

2.6. The ELT industry, culture, ideology and change

It is sometimes claimed that ELT in the last 40-50 years has developed its own clearly identifiable *international professional culture*, and that this process has taken place in tandem with the development of an academic culture of *applied linguistics*. In the light of arguments put forward in previous sections of this chapter, in which broad categories of culture, such as 'national cultures' were closely questioned, it is necessary to examine the extent to which such 'cultures' really do exist, and, more importantly, how far individual teachers in different countries can claim any meaningful membership of them.

Howatt (1984: 265) argues that applied linguistics is not "the recent development that is sometimes supposed" and that it can in fact be traced back to Sweet's *'Practical Study of Languages'* in the 1870s, when the study of language and the study of learning were first combined into the study of language learning (ibid.:181-2). However, it is was not until the 1960s that the term "applied linguistics" became common currency and by this time its emphasis was as much on language teaching as on language learning.

Applied linguistics from the 1970s to the present has seemingly had a great deal of influence on the way teachers teach and therefore on the way learners are required to learn. For example, the current emphasis within the international 'ELT culture' on

communicative methodology is seen to derive from the work of Hymes (1972) and others inquiring into the nature of communicative competence and its importance for language learners. Applied linguists such as Widdowson (with the appearance of *"Teaching Language as Communication"* in 1978), Wilkins, Candlin, Brumfit and others have developed this theme and have inspired syllabus designers, materials writers and teachers to adopt a communicative approach and classroom methods which claim to put a great emphasis on developing communicative competence (see section 9 of this chapter.)

The influence of applied linguists is also felt in official bodies, such as TESOL and IATEFL, which have been set up to enable members of the international 'ELT culture' to share information and ideas. Journals such as *"TESOL quarterly"* and the *"English Language Teaching Journal"* both reflect and spread the influence of applied linguistics. Even though both of these have a truly international readership of ELT practitioners, it can be argued that they disseminate the ideas of a small but influential group of professionals who are mainly based in the UK/USA. Block (1997) in an article in the IATEFL newsletter, provides interesting statistics concerning the nationality of contributors to four major journals (including *"TESOL quarterly"*) , which appear to support such an argument.

Even among these professionals there is an apparent hierarchy, which, it might be argued, ultimately awards the highest level of respect to applied linguists, who (perhaps unconsciously) use their authority to preserve this status quo. An interesting illustration of this can be seen in two (by now much-quoted) articles printed by the ELTJ in 1985. In the first, the EFL materials writer Michael Swan launched an attack on what he saw as the excesses of communicative methodology, (Swan 1985). In a reply to Swan's article, Widdowson (1985) accused him of both denying "the validity of theoretical enquiry" and making "easy appeals to prejudice in the name of experience and common sense." That Widdowson felt the need to intervene in this way might conceivably be interpreted as showing that it was of some importance for him to preserve the balance of opinion which

prevailed at that time in favour of communicative methodology (without denying the need for constant questioning of the 'new orthodoxy'). The most interesting point in the whole affair was that both articles were directly inspired by another article by a less well-known practitioner, Li Xiaoju. Entitled "In defence of the communicative approach", it was published by the ELTJ in 1984. It would not be an exaggeration to say that in the ensuing debate between two respected ELT specialists, one an applied linguist, one a materials writer, her original contribution was almost forgotten.

As well as being subject to the academic influence of applied linguistics, an 'international culture' of ELT would also be seen to be subject to another form of influence which is perhaps even stronger - that of commercial interests. Because demand for the English language and English language teaching is constantly increasing, ELT has become big business. In the UK the private sector is no longer alone in seeking to profit from the growing market - it has been joined by colleges of education and university departments from the state sector offering courses of every description for English language learners, their teachers, teacher trainers and even trainers of the trainers. International publishers have representatives and sales outlets in every country where English is taught. Specialist ELT consultants based in the UK travel round the world selling their expertise. Even ELT projects which appear as part of an aid package to another country can in the medium or long-term generate income for the UK. Native speaker teachers and teacher trainers from the UK gain lucrative contracts - often earning a much higher salary than local teachers in the country where they are working. Finally the EFL examinations industry in the UK has become a highly profitable enterprise with the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (belying the 'local' element of its title) leading the way.

In the opinion of Pennycook (1994:154) we have now arrived at a situation in which ELT is now no longer just "good for business" but is "good business itself". The British Council is one organization which seems to reflect this idea very well - 20 years ago it appeared to regard the demand for the English language as an attractive bonus which

might make its work of maintaining and spreading Britain's influence a little easier. In 1999 it runs a worldwide network of D.T.O's (Direct Teaching Operation) language schools around the world.

It is arguable that the commercial aspect of ELT affects individual teachers much more directly than the more academic aspect driven by the ideas of UK and US applied linguists. Only a small number of English language teachers actually join TESOL or IATEFL and attend their international or regional conferences. The majority of teachers do not subscribe to the *ELTJ*, nor even to publications which aim to reflect classroom teaching in a more practical way, such as *Modern English Teacher.* It is likely that the readership of international journals and the participants who attend international conferences are in fact unrepresentative of the international English language teacher population. Yet those who do not read journals or attend conferences - in fact the majority of teachers - may also (in the long run) be influenced by the exchange of ideas which takes place within them without the advantage of having their own voice heard.

In fact, it is the commercial sector which seemingly does most to help (indirectly) propagate the ideas of applied linguistics, and *not* applied linguists or the journals in which they write, or the conferences at which they speak. The export of textbooks and other materials from the UK and USA to other countries as well as the export of UK-trained or USA-trained native speaker teachers bring the latest methods, the latest approaches and ideas directly to local classroom teachers, who generally welcome them and tend not to ask if they are appropriate, being influenced by considerations other than appropriacy. Among these, Pennycook (1994:164) points to the importance of the concept of 'modernization', while Phillipson (1992:8) emphasizes associations of progress and prosperity.

In professional English teaching circles, English tends to be regarded as an incontrovertible boon, as does language policy and pedagogy emanating from Britain and the USA. It is felt that while English was imposed by force in colonial times,

contemporary language policies are determined by the state of the market ('demand') and the force of argument (rational planning in the light of the available 'facts'). The discourse accompanying and legitimating the export of English to the rest of the world has been so persuasive that English has been equated with progress and prosperity.

Dendrinos (1992:40) points out that in the case of textbook materials, teachers' demands for a 'modern' approach to teaching, together with their underlying desires for progress and prosperity, greatly influence the way in which publishers produce and market teaching materials. The results are features such as sophisticated design and artwork, consistent use of colour photographs, books printed on expensive paper, accessories such as audio and video cassette materials, all of which "raise the costs, but make the commodity attractive and marketable".

Teachers are easily seduced by such tactics. Dendrinos continues:-

Availability of attractive, expensive international publications in the market create consumer expectations which differ from expectations in relation to other schoolbooks. For example, consumers - teachers and pupils - give top priority to the colourful and sophisticated design and layout, which are easier to spot than the pedagogic quality of the materials. (ibid.:42)

The message here is clear enough. If the main criteria for selecting materials are considerations such as layout, design, accessories or colour photographs, then more important pedagogic considerations may be overlooked. The result can be materials which are inappropriate for the local context (see section 7). A teacher receiving a free copy of a new textbook from a publisher may indeed feel that she is being helped in her work, and in fact many teachers do say that they find publishers' representatives more helpful to them than methodologists or other 'outside experts'. But ultimately, what is happening is that the dominant ELT ideology is being disseminated not so much by coercion as by consent (cf Fairclough 1989). The consequences may be a clash of ideologies when teachers try to reconcile the approach underlying the new materials with the educational cultural traditions of the school and the society in which they work.

2.7. Educational inappropriacy & the origins of conflict

Several writers have very definite views concerning problems caused by the transfer of teaching approaches perceived to be inappropriate to a particular context. Pennycook (1994:159), for example, argues that:

The export of applied linguistic theory and of Western-trained language teachers constantly promotes inappropriate teaching approaches to diverse settings. It is of fundamental importance to acknowledge that different ways of teaching and learning are embedded in social, political, philosophical and cultural differences. It is not surprising, then, that conflicts often occur.

However, appropriacy is a relative concept and there may be considerable disagreement among teachers and other professionals as to what constitutes an 'inappropriate approach' or method or set of materials for a particular teaching context. The assumption that local solutions are always best for local problems also needs to be questioned (cf Holliday 1994:158): "It would be dangerous to be too romantic about the innate ability of local teachers to know their students so well that conflicts are reduced". It is more than likely that individual teachers' construction of events that take place in the classroom can vary greatly even within one clearly-defined educational culture. In other words, local teachers, as well as outsiders are not immune from using unsuitable or 'inappropriate' materials or methods in their teaching.

This note of caution does not prevent us from identifying several general misconceptions which might give rise both to the promotion of unsuitable teaching methods and the different types of conflict which they can cause within the context of educational change. At the same time, the question of whether conflict is in itself undesirable needs to be closely examined (see section 8).

The first misconception concerns the promotion of 'modernity' and the belief that if an approach or idea is new, it will automatically be an improvement on what has gone before. The overvaluing of what is new and 'modern' is very often accompanied by a denigration of the traditional and a tendency to see things in black-and-white. Nowhere can this be seen to such effect as in the debate concerning the merits of a communicative approach to language teaching, which, according to Holliday (1994:165), is interpreted as being a basic measure of modernity or progressiveness within the profession. This point of view demands that teaching should either promote language as communication (good) rather than language as a system (bad); fluency (good) rather than accuracy (bad); student-centred lessons (good), rather than teacher-centred lessons (bad); pairwork and groupwork (good) rather than lockstep (bad), and so on.

This is clearly an oversimplification of the kind of debate which has taken place since the beginning of the 1980s concerning the theoretical basis and practical applications of a more 'communicative' approach to language teaching. Since it is outside the scope of this research project to provide a detailed examination of the theoretical justification for such an approach, on the grounds that the project is more concerned with the perceived effects of different approaches than their origins, it is therefore sufficient, at this point, to note that such an approach can be placed within Clark's "progressivist" (1987:91) category of educational ideologies. And because of the strong linking in teachers' minds of the ideas of a progressivist ideology with 'progress' and 'modernity', several writers have expressed concern that teachers have been unthinkingly pressurized into adopting communicative methodology as a means of showing that they are 'forward-looking' and 'modern' in their approach. Luxon (1994) describes the anxiety experienced by many teachers as a result of this, while Ur (1996) points out that while Swan (1985, see section 6) felt able to express his reservations openly:

Teachers on the whole did not feel that they could openly criticize the new orthodoxy, but in fact many continued with 'old-fashioned' techniques such as grammar drills, feeling, perhaps, a little guilty about it.

A second misconception which can lead to the promotion of methods and materials which are unsuitable for certain teaching contexts concerns the desirability of monolingualism in language teaching. In the early days of communicative language teaching methodology, writers such as Wilkins (1974:83) and Widdowson (1978:159) deliberately stressed the importance of translation and the advantage of the mother tongue as a learning resource. More recently, however, in many English language teaching and teacher training materials (see for example 1994 video materials by Allan et al.) , there is an assumption that the best way to learn a language is always through the medium of the language itself. This point of view automatically downgrades the importance of use of the mother tongue and of translation in language learning, although these are arguably both powerful tools which a suitably qualified teacher (ie one who speaks the students' mother tongue) can make use of. Pennycook (1994:169) argues that "the proscription of monolingual English teaching is a key factor in imported methods".

Howatt (1997) points out that, although the international influence of communicative methodology and monolingualism have made translation seem less important to language teachers, "it could well be that the central and eastern European tradition will encourage a review of its role in ELT and the role of the mother tongue as an aid to learning in general". Meanwhile in Central and Eastern Europe itself, because of the recent influx of communicative language teaching materials which assume a monolingualist approach, teachers feel less comfortable if they have to rely on Slovak, Czech, Polish or Hungarian to explain a difficult point of English grammar. The risk is that they will lose a valuable aid to learning, at the very moment when Western European applied linguists and materials writers are beginning to reassess their own ideas. Other writers such as Harbord (1992) appear to support this view, while Dendrinos (1992:69-70) puts forward a case for use of the mother tongue in textbooks as well.

Promotion of a monolingualist approach frequently implies another misconceived idea that can lead to conflict: that of the supremacy of the native speaker teacher of English

over the non-native speaker teacher. It is argued, for example, that native speaker teachers of English provide a better language model for students (especially with respect to pronunciation), that native speakers have better grammatical knowledge of their language, that non-native speakers tend to be more 'bookish' and less up-to-date in their use of the target language, and so on. There are several problems here: not least is that of actually deciding who is a native speaker teacher of English and who is not (see, for example, Christophersen 1992 or Stern 1983:341). Ironically, according to Davies (1991:8) "the native speaker boundary is ..... one as much created by non-native speakers as by native speakers themselves".

Medgyes, however, has maintained consistently that non-native speaker teachers have many advantages of which they are frequently unaware: for example, as learners of the foreign language they can provide a good learning model for their students; they can teach language learning strategies more effectively; they can supply learners with more information about the English language; they can anticipate and prevent language difficulties better; they can be more empathetic to the needs and problems of learners; and last but not least, they can make use of the learners' mother tongue. (Medgyes 1994:51)

In spite of the same writer's conclusion (ibid:76) that native speaker and non-native speaker teachers' respective strengths and weaknesses balance each other out, his positive approach is not shared by other writers, nor perhaps by many non-native speaker teachers themselves. Pennycook believes that existing power and business interests wish to maintain the perceived supremacy of the native speaker teacher (1994:176). Phillipson maintains that what he terms the "native speaker fallacy":

..... *dates from a time when language teaching was indistinguishable from culture teaching, and when all learners of English were assumed to be familiarizing themselves with the culture that English originates from and for contact with that culture. It also pre-dates tape-recordings and other technical resources which now permit learners to be*

exposed to a wide range of native speaker models. (1992:.195-6)

Dendrinos (1992:50) in informal interviews with teachers of English in Greece, Portugal and Spain discovered that they believed that when an EFL textbook was written by a native English speaker and had been marketed by an international publisher it seemed to carry greater authority and prestige. They also felt that non-native authors lacked fluency and a feeling for the target language and that this was reflected in their work. A final concern was that they would fail to bring into the classroom the world of the target culture and its social environment.

The unease felt by many non-native speaker teachers about the possibility of being compared unfavourably with native speaker teachers is very real. Unfortunately, UK and US organizations involved in setting up English language teaching projects in other countries sometimes appear to have little understanding of this problem, which often leads to a situation where confident but relatively unqualified American or British teachers are accorded more respect than they perhaps deserve as foreign 'experts', when their only real source of expertise is their mastery of their own language. Pochiecha (1992) describes a situation of this type in Poland where unqualified Peace Corps volunteers have been given teacher training responsibility among Polish English language teachers, while Medvecky (1995) describes his problems in taking over classes taught by native speaker teachers in Slovakia.

The kind of warnings given by Wallace (1991:9-10) concerning the questionable credentials of some ELT 'experts' are particularly relevant in a context where perceived expertise appears to assume such importance among some non-native speaker teachers. Interestingly enough, a survey carried out among university and high school students of English language in Slovakia (Thomas 1995) seems to indicate that students are more ready than their teachers to question the supremacy of the native speaker outside 'expert'. A final point is that, according to McFarren (1996) in her reply to Medvecky (1995), the

"roles in which native speakers have been cast" is ultimately prejudicial to native speaker teachers themselves: they are"square pegs in round holes".

From the various misconceptions that have just been discussed arise different kinds of tensions, which in turn can lead to conflict. Tensions between the 'traditional' and the 'modern', between use of the mother tongue and use of the target language, between non-native and native speaker teachers (to give just three examples) all require some form of outlet. The next section looks at the different forms which such conflict can take and its effect on teachers coping with change.

2.8. The effects of cultural & ideological conflict on teachers

In previous sections we have examined the nature of educational cultures and ideologies, as well as potential causes of cultural/ideological conflict in ELT. The next step is to try to anticipate what the effects of such conflict might be on individual teachers, thus looking forward to one of the main areas of enquiry of this research project.

It is often assumed that conflict must necessarily be a negative experience for the conflicting parties, or those caught between conflicting ideas. However, this need not be the case. Apple (1990:97) maintains that:

Conflicts are the systematic products of the changing structure of a society and by their very nature tend to lead to progress. The 'order' of society, hence, becomes the regularity of change. The 'reality' of society is conflict and flux, not a 'closed functional system'.

The problem with this view is that it tends to contradict what Apple refers to as "the basic rule of activity that constitutes the unconscious negative value associated with conflict" (ibid:98). We tend to see conflict as a "law breaking" type of activity, whereas it might be argued that, by raising the alarm about problem areas, it can ultimately be "law creating" as well (ibid:98).

Apple also argues that the hidden ideological curriculum in schools "serves to reinforce basic rules surrounding the nature of conflict and its uses. It posits a network of assumptions that, when internalized by students, establishes the boundaries of legitimacy". (ibid:87). In other words, there are a series of boundary lines over which teachers and students learn not to step; otherwise the status quo will be threatened.

When a new educational ideology is introduced, unwittingly or deliberately, gradually or suddenly, the boundary lines of what is acceptable and what is unacceptable begin to shift. Even what appears to be the smallest change can have multiple effects. Bowers (1983:101) in discussing curriculum development projects uses the metaphor of a spider's web to describe the "chain of implications" which will result from trying to alter the status quo in some way. A small movement at one corner of the web is seen to create reverberations which are felt throughout the rest of the web: similarly, making even a minor change in (say) the personnel allocated to a particular project will surely affect other aspects of the project such as time allotted, resources needed, costs, and so on.

When boundary lines of acceptable practice are seen to shift and the consequences begin to be felt in different directions, it is often easy to overlook the human factor in educational change. For example, schools adopting a new language teaching syllabus must often concentrate on practical problems such as the provision of new textbooks, the purchase of new equipment, the adapting of tests to new teaching materials, or vice versa. However, even new textbooks are not as central to the process of educational change as the teachers who must make use of them. There is a temptation among educational planners to try to categorize teachers in the same way as they might the 'tools of the trade' such as textbooks. Thus Nicholls (1983:39) is able to point to the comparison of "innovators and resisters" in much of the literature of the 1970s concerning educational change. She argues that very few writers appear to see the positive side of resistance to change:

If the positive side of resistance is considered, the idea of overcoming resistance is no longer appropriate. It becomes more appropriate to think in terms of taking account of resistance. In other words, it may be more helpful to the successful implementation of an innovation if its advocates and supporters are prepared to listen to and seriously consider the comments of resisters. (ibid:41)

'The positive side of resistance' is also discussed by a few writers in the East and Central European region. Patrascu (1995) considers the question of teachers who are reluctant to face up to change in his own country (Romania) and points out that someone who does not "embrace a new idea instantly and uncritically" should not be regarded as a problem, but an asset. Nizegorodcew (1994) discovered from a survey among Polish teacher trainees that a teachers' personal communication skills were valued much more highly than adherence to any particular teaching style or willingness/unwillingness to embrace change. Petkova (1995) in Bulgaria stresses the importance of change as a long-term rather than a short-term commitment, and the need to respect initial negative reactions to new ideas. In agreement with these writers, I will argue the need for such tolerance and respect for teachers' opinions.

Another way in which educational planners have failed to address the human element in educational change has been, according to Fullan (1991:127), "the naive assumption that involving some teachers on curriculum committees" would increase acceptance by other teachers. In fact the reverse is often the case since teachers who are given the chance to make their voices heard may be seen as receiving privileged treatment. "Change is a highly personal experience" (ibid.) and the failure to consider teachers as individual people, with different individual characteristics may well lead to a conflict between two or more entrenched positions, with negative consequences for the proposed changes.

Sikes (1992:44) reinforces this argument in considering the case of experienced teachers in the face of educational change:

Teachers differ. Their careers will have differed depending on their own ambition, the opportunities they encountered, their sex, ethnic group, subject area and the phase of education they work in. Their perceptions and experiences of imposed change will also vary depending on their philosophies and ideologies and, most importantly, on what the changes actually mean for them.

Teachers' "perceptions and experiences" of change may depend on both personal and institutional ideologies. According to Apple (1990:8-9) institutions can operate a kind of ideological filter as far as the "formal corpus of school knowledge", modes of teaching, principles and standards are concerned. Such an ideological filter might also be said to operate at an individual level. Woods (1996:190) claims that rather than trying to conform to a particular institutional ideology:

A teacher's priorities in structuring the classroom teaching will .... depend crucially on that teacher's own assumptions about language, learning and teaching.

Woods suggests that most teaching programmes carry an underlying assumption that what is contained in the syllabus will be what is taught in the classroom. However, "the assumptions underlying the actual teaching that goes on in the second language classroom have remained unexplored" (ibid.) In this context a distinction is made between an *assumption*, as the acceptance of something which we take to be true for the time being, and a *belief,* which according to Woods refers to "an acceptance of a proposition for which there is no conventional knowledge, one that is not demonstrable, and for which there is accepted disagreement. On a continuum going from certainty to uncertainty, "I know" is seen to be stronger than "I assume", which in turn is stronger than "I believe" (ibid:195).

The divergence of teachers' assumptions and beliefs, even within one institution, concerning the acceptability or unacceptability of educational change tends to be more pronounced because of the *isolation* in which many teachers work. The problematic nature of teacher autonomy mentioned by White (1991:166-167) is not just a nuisance

from the point of view of the educational planner ("There are two quite different viewpoints: that of the change agent ..... and that of the receiver .") (ibid:179), but can also cause genuine problems for teachers themselves. Fullan (1991: 131) considers that:

Teacher isolation and its opposite - collegiality - provide the best starting point for considering what works for the teacher

Collegiality is a concept to which we will return in section 10 of this chapter, when examining the implications of educational change for teacher development programmes, and the importance of alleviating the isolation of the individual teacher left to cope with change alone.

2.9. How teachers cope with change: the example of communicative methodology

In this section some specific examples of projects involving ELT innovation are examined. In each case the project aim is somewhat similar - to promote a more 'communicative' teaching methodology to replace a more 'traditional' approach. In order to fully appreciate the problems involved in such attempts to bring about educational change, it is first necessary to examine briefly how the terms 'communicative' and 'traditional' might be interpreted, and if it is possible to reach a consensus as to their meaning.

We have already seen in chapter 1 (see p.19) that Prague linguists in the 1920s were using the term 'communicative function' of language long before the publication of Hymes' seminal paper (1972) on communicative competence, frequently referred to as containing the first serious discussion of the subject, and by implication beginning the era of 'communicative language teaching' (CLT). The problem is that neither before nor since Hymes has there been any clearly agreed and internationally-accepted definition of what CLT really refers to. When Littlewood (1981:1), for example, states that: "one of the most characteristic features of communicative language teaching is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language, combining

these into a more fully communicative view" , it is not difficult to demonstrate that he is using the terms 'communicative' and 'functional' in a very different way from the linguists of the Prague School (see Chapter 1, p.19 for further discussion of this).

Many writers identify two forms of CLT, a 'strong' form and a 'weak' form. Howatt (1984:279) distinguishes them in this way:

The weak version which has become more or less standard practice in the last ten years, stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes and, characteristically, attempts to integrate such activities into a wider programme of language teaching .....

The 'strong' version of communicative teaching, on the other hand, advances the claim that language is acquired through communication, so that it is not merely a question of activating an existing but inert knowledge of the language, but of stimulating the development of the language system itself. If the former could be described as 'learning to use' English, the latter entails 'using English to learn it'.

The problem with such a definition is that it begs questions such as what constitutes a 'communicative purpose', and whether it is possible to provide a definition of such a concept which will be meaningful for teachers brought up within different linguistic and methodological traditions. Nevertheless, Howatt's definitions are widely quoted by other writers, including Richards & Rodgers (1986:66), who prefer to describe certain characteristics of CLT, rather than attempt to define it. Widdowson's earlier plea for "the need for critical examination" in this respect (1978:ix) has perhaps not been heeded as much as it might have been.

Further confusion is caused by Howatt's assertion that "there is no reason why communicative performance cannot be promoted on the basis of a traditional language syllabus" (1984:287). This raises the question of what is considered to be 'traditional'. The strong suspicion is that there must be a relative interpretation of this concept, with not only different educational cultures, but perhaps also individual teachers disagreeing

as to its meaning. What Howatt himself meant by the 'traditional language syllabus' is clear enough when he suggests that "the original motivation for adopting a communicative approach in the early seventies was remedial, an attempt to overcome the inadequacies of existing, structural syllabuses, materials and methods" (ibid.). However, there is a strong case for arguing that in the 1990s there are some teaching contexts where a 'communicative' and a 'traditional' approach amount to the same thing, and CLT constitutes the status quo ; in such a situation 'traditionalists' would defend their version of CLT, while 'non-traditionalists' might question the value of its characteristic attributes such as an emphasis on fluency over accuracy, or a promotion of groupwork over lockstep modes of teaching.

In spite of the uncertainty concerning different interpretations of what are considered to be 'traditional' or 'communicative' ways of teaching, the contributions of writers such as Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983), quoted in Richard & Rodgers (1986:67) or Luxon (1994) are still useful. Whether these writers are comparing 'communicative' vs. 'audio-lingual' (the former case) , or 'communicative' vs. 'traditional (the latter case), they at least provide detailed comparisons from one point of view. Luxon's article also has the merit of being one of the few devoted to the effects on teachers of having to change from one way of teaching to another. However, such contributions can in no way be regarded as definitive. In the accounts of the case studies which follow, it must always be borne in mind that, as yet, there appears to be no recognizable definition of 'communicative language teaching' or its derivatives such as 'communicative activities' and 'communicative classroom", that will be equally applicable to and accepted by the different educational and cultural contexts being described.

The first example of how teachers cope with changing to a more 'communicative' approach to teaching is provided by Karavas-Doukas (1995: 53-66). This author conducted a series of interviews among Greek state school teachers of EFL who had been involved in a curriculum innovation. Her aim was to assess the degree of implementation

of a 'communicative learner-centred curriculum' and a series of textbooks for schools, which had been developed in line with Council of Europe guidelines.

What she found is that, firstly, the new textbooks did not go down well with the teachers, who had previously been allowed to use the book of their choice. They also resented the extra work they were forced to do in preparing lessons based on unfamiliar books. Secondly, teachers complained that the new books lacked explicit grammar presentations, controlled grammar practice activities and longer reading texts. The interview respondents stressed how they deliberately sought out "examples from some old-fashioned grammar book" to supplement this lack of material. Thirdly, the teachers' guides to the textbooks were deemed to have too much theory and too many detailed procedures, with the result that most teachers ignored them.

Karavas-Doukas also asked the teachers their general opinions concerning a communicative approach to language teaching. Perceptions varied widely: " a quarter of the teachers believed that the communicative approach created more opportunities for speaking. The other teachers perceived the communicative approach more in terms of what it is not" (ibid:59). The negative perceptions of this larger group varied according to the individual - some teachers feared chaos in the classroom, others were concerned about the lack of emphasis on error correction, and so on. Karavas-Doukas concludes that:

Teachers' inability to cope with the demands of the innovation as a result of their inadequate training, the incompatibility of the innovation with teachers' teaching/learning theories, and the failure of the innovation to cater for or mesh with the realities of the classroom and wider educational context were found to be important causes of teachers' resistance to or rejection of the innovation (ibid:65-66).

The second illustration of how teachers cope with educational change is documented by Sturman (1992:141-161) in his account of a team-teaching project in Japanese secondary schools involving native speaker (mostly British) and non-native speaker (Japanese) pairs of teachers. The aims of the project did not include an overt promotion of a more 'communicative' approach to teaching. However, this was implied in the project's third aim: "to influence teaching methodology by example and cooperation". Although there was a stated intention that this 'influence' should be two-way, in practice it was assumed that the native speaker outsiders were there to have a positive influence on the way their Japanese colleagues taught, rather than vice versa.

This mismatch between intentions and perceptions became clear from the comments of the Japanese teachers involved in the project:

There was an assumption, at the very beginning of the project, that all the Japanese teachers involved in the project agreed with the aims of the project, thought it was a good and necessary thing and actively wanted to take part in it. It was a rude surprise to find that this was very far from the case. In fact, at the end of the first year of the project, the Japanese teachers complained strongly that the students' reading and writing skills were suffering (Sturman 1992:151)

The Japanese teachers eventually argued their case sufficiently well to modify the aims of the project: rather than concentrating on developing speaking and listening skills, reading and writing were from then on to be given more prominence as well.

Sturman, in his concluding remarks states that "if, however, the Mombusho *(Ministry of Education)* communicative syllabus is introduced in 1995, then the value of the project may be more immediately apparent" (ibid:160). These remarks seem to indicate that the team-teaching project, for all its collaborative intentions, might prove to be the precursor of a Ministry-sanctioned unilateral switch to a more 'communicative' approach in state school English language classes, leaving teachers, once again, to cope with change as best they can. In fact the new English language communicative syllabus for schools was

indeed introduced and is commented on by LoCastro (1996:44) as follows:

The Mombusho-produced curriculum gives evidence of having been written with the best of intentions, and shows an awareness of current trends in language learning in the Anglo-American context.

However, LoCastro believes that "classroom teachers were not consulted during the process of planning and drawing up the new curriculum"and that "there appears to be a gross mismatch between the supposed aims and the sociocultural context" (ibid:45). She also points out that:

'Communication' itself may not be a universally shared concept; that is, it may have different meanings in different cultures ... What may appear to be commonsense notions - 'communication' and 'interaction' - thus become problematic with the unexamined adoption of Anglo-American applied linguistic concepts into cultural contexts whose underlying values and belief systems may entail different interpretations. (ibid.)

This is a very interesting claim, which lies outside the scope of this research project, but which is mentioned here as an illustration of how teachers are often forced to cope not just with conflicting educational ideologies, but with a debate in which key concepts are seen to be highly ambiguous. Like Karavas-Doukas, LoCastro suggests that "re-education" of teachers may be needed if classroom practices, and attitudes and beliefs concerning good practice are really to change. Without involvement for teachers in the planning stage and support for teachers at the implementation stage, curriculum projects such as this one are much more likely to fail. Having looked at the some of the lessons to be learned from such case studies, in the final section of this chapter we turn to a discussion of ways in which the kind of support needed by teachers in the face of change can be provided.

2.10. Culture, ideology & educational change: implications for teacher development

The need to relate educational change to teacher development and teacher education may seem obvious, but according to Fullan & Hargreaves (1992:1) not enough systematic attention has been given to the topic. They argue that:

Successful change involves learning how to do something new. As such, the process of implementation is essentially a learning process. Thus, when it is linked to specific innovations, teacher development and implementation go hand in hand.

If change is to work for teachers, what are the factors which will help contribute towards this? Perhaps the first need is to address the problem of *teacher isolation* (see also section 8, p.68). If teachers can be encouraged to collaborate with each other rather than try to cope with the effects of change on their own, then, it can be argued, that this would surely benefit everyone. However, there are several immediate problems here. Firstly, the idea of teachers working in isolation is deeply-ingrained in most educational cultures. Fullan & Hargreaves (1992:12) maintain that:

The problem of isolation is a deep-seated one. Architecture often supports it. The timetable reinforces it. Overload sustains it. History legitimates it.

There is also a thin dividing line between isolation, autonomy and even independence. Although teachers may have reservations about the negative side of the coin - isolation and even loneliness, according to White (1991:167) and Bell (1995: 19-29), they view the positive side - the degree of freedom and autonomy that can be enjoyed in the profession - very favourably, and defend their right to it fiercely.

The alternatives to isolation may also be less appealing. Fullan & Hargreaves (1992: 12-15) discuss the problems associated with 'groupthink' where peer pressure can lead to faddism and the suppression of individual critical thinking. A further problem can be that of "balkanized teacher cultures" described by Hargreaves & Fullan (1992:223), where teachers are prepared to attach their loyalties to particular groups of colleagues, but not

to others. Arguably, "balkanization" exists in every school to a certain extent, and should not be overlooked by those seeking to promote positive reaction to change among teaching colleagues.

In spite of these potential problems, the fact remains that teachers do need access to other teachers to share ideas and experiences in the face of educational change, and to offer each other mutual support. It can be argued that *collegiality, collaboration, communication* and *articulation* are crucial factors in enabling teachers to cope. Fullan (1991: 131-2) maintains that successful change depends very strongly on teachers interacting with each other and that "collegiality among teachers, as measured by the frequency of communication, mutual support, help, etc. is a strong indicator of implementation success". Collegiality, or "the creation of productive and supportive collegial relationships among teachers" (Hargreaves 1994:186), is seen as the opposite pole of isolation. Meanwhile collaboration " involves the mutual negotiation of purposes and interests by parties committed to the common goal of programme improvement" (Grimett 1993:200). It can be seen that the two concepts are sufficiently close as to be used interchangeably by some writers, for example Fullan (1991), White (1991) and Hargreaves (1994), who argues that both form vital bridges between school improvement and teacher development and adds:

If collaboration and collegiality are seen as promoting professional growth and internally generated school improvement, they are also widely viewed as ways of securing effective implementation of externally introduced change. (Hargreaves 1994:186)

Once having accepted the need for teachers to interact and collaborate with each other in order to cope with educational change, the next step is to address the question of how this might best be achieved. This is where the third and fourth elements of the equation, *communication* and *articulation* come in. Nicholls (1997:49) argues that:

Communication and articulation are essential if ideas are to be explored. They provide a way for individuals to gain understanding by being required to make their thinking explicit and public .... The articulation of opinions, hypotheses or interpretations of events, benefits any joint activity that may take place, by enabling individuals to self-reflect. Public articulation reflects the more interactive (rather than declarative) quality of learning.

The linking of communication with colleagues and self-reflection (cf Wallace 1991:12-14) is thus seen to be an important element of professional development. According to this way of thinking, conflict and difference of opinions are also seen as something positive, "a way of enforcing reflection and rethinking perspectives" (ibid). Collaboration of this kind is very far from the idea of "groupthink" mentioned previously - it is no longer mistakenly equated with the idea of consensus, but, on the other hand, involves respect for cultural and ideological differences. Collaborative partnerships that try to ignore or to obliterate such differences for the sake of consensus (or 'contrived collegiality', Hargreaves 1994) usually end in failure and recriminations.

There is however a problem in encouraging teachers to articulate their opinions in a public forum, as suggested by Nicholls. This way of thinking assumes an ability for all to be equally articulate. If the forum for debate is too public, individual teachers who have difficulty in expressing their ideas, or who lack confidence in doing so, may experience great frustration and become disillusioned. Success seems to depend very much on the nature of the forum for debate and the degree to which participants feel comfortable within it (see also Chapter 3, section 6 for further discussion of this).

Different ways of promoting debate among teachers, which will hopefully lead to collaborative development and self-reflection, include networking support groups, teacher research groups (Schecter & Ramirez 1992), teacher development workshops (including those organized by EFL publishers), conferences , swap-shops, joint publications, peer observation and team-teaching schemes, without forgetting the importance of informal staffroom conversation. In each case, possibilities arise for

teachers to exchange ideas, to interpret important concepts and to form opinions as a result of collaborating with colleagues. When some kind of educational change is involved, the exchange of different ideas within collaborative partnerships may be of great benefit in enabling individuals to cope with change and the effects of change. Such debate may also serve to alleviate the lack of consultation often felt by many teachers when they are faced with sudden change and can contribute towards the concept of *ownership* (Kennedy 1988) of change taking place, and thus some degree of control over their own destiny.

A final point to make in this chapter is that the need for collaboration among teaching colleagues in the face of educational change is also reflected in an equal need for similar collaboration when teachers and educational researchers meet (Cameron et al. 1992). In the next chapter, a design will be proposed for this research project which seeks to enable teachers to engage in the kind of constructive debate proposed here. The voices of Slovak state school classroom teachers will, it is hoped, not only help to provide empirical data illustrating the problems and implications of rapid educational change, but will also serve to provide pointers for solutions within teacher development programmes and initiatives of the future.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH PROJECT DESIGN & METHODS

3.1. A case study format

The original aim of this research project was to present a series of case studies involving teachers in several different countries, each of which would serve to illustrate the problems such teachers experience when coping with sudden change, as well as the potential for conflict when different educational cultures and ideologies meet . However, over a period of 2-3 years, its scope was gradually narrowed down to one research context only - the experiences of state school English language teachers in the Slovak Republic. There have been several reasons for this: firstly, it can be argued that the educational context in Slovakia shares great similarities with other countries in the rest of the Central and East European region, and that findings from the Slovak context may therefore be applicable elsewhere. Secondly, the process of data collection would present practical problems if more than one educational context were to be explored: for example, the question of who would collect data in each environment, how to ensure compatibility of data collection methods, how to ensure that the data collected earliest would retain its relevance, and so on. Finally, presenting case studies of teachers in different countries raises the question of whether it is possible (or even desirable) to compare and analyse data collected in very different environments in a meaningful and reliable way.

The decision to make one particular case study (rather than several) the unit of analysis within this research project placed an extra burden on the proposed methodology. The arguments for adopting a case study approach rather than any other alternative needed to be made clear and justified . The potential shortcomings of such an approach also needed to be recognized, so that, as far as possible, they could be overcome. In addition, a certain amount of confusion concerning the role of case studies in research generally needed to be addressed.

Dealing with the last point first, it is worth noting at the outset that a case study cannot really be classified as a *research method* if this is understood to signify only a means of data collection, (although in practice case studies are sometimes presented as an alternative to interviews, questionnaires or observations.) A case study is rather a *research strategy,* which may involve different methods of data collection within itself. Thus interviewing, questionnaire design and participant observation (to name a few methods) may all have a place within a research design based on a case study strategy.

Yin (1994:13) defines a case study as "an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident". The "real-life" element referred to clearly characterizes the common perception of a case study as focussing on real individuals, events, organizations etc.. The second part of the definition reinforces the first. It is argued that while an experiment tries to isolate a phenomenon from its context, and a survey deals with context in only a limited way, a case study deliberately concerns itself with contextual conditions as well as the phenomena which are the main research focus. This emphasis on context, according to Yin, implies a whole set of other technical characteristics:

The case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points ..... relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion ..... benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis
(ibid.)

The case study is thus perceived to be a comprehensive research strategy, rather than just a means of data collection and analysis. It is perhaps more accurate to classify a case study as a *methodological framework* rather than a research method; in this capacity it can be compared and contrasted with other such frameworks - ethnographic, historical, survey and experimental design frameworks come to mind.

According to Nunan (1992a:75), there are difficulties in distinguishing a case study and an ethnographic approach to research. However, as well as being "generally more limited in scope than ethnography", case studies, it is argued, can make use of quantitative as well as qualitative data. This is an important observation, rightly suggesting that a case study can involve not just a variety of data collection methods, but also very different types of data. Distinguishing a case study approach from a survey or experimental approach is a somewhat easier task (Cohen and Manion 1994:106) (Allwright & Bailey 1991:51) but one which raises important issues such as the importance of generalizability and therefore that of external validity (see below). Yin (1994:3) suggests that confusion is often caused when different research strategies are allocated too rigid a place in a hierarchy "We were once taught to believe that case studies were appropriate for the exploratory phase of an investigation, that surveys and histories were appropriate for the descriptive phase, and that experiments were the only way of doing explanatory or causal inquiries". The case study strategy, which provides the framework for this research project has, it is hoped, involved all three kinds of data (exploratory, descriptive, explanatory) at different stages of its development, rather than attempting to fit into the kind of hierarchical arrangement which Yin refutes.

A case study research strategy offers clear advantages to the researcher interested in particular people, organizations or events, and who wishes to gain in-depth data from such "clearly-bounded units of analysis". But case studies have also been the subject of much criticism from different writers in different fields. It is essential to examine carefully the problems which are often associated with a case study research strategy in order to attempt to overcome them, or, at the very least, to provide strong arguments which will serve to outweigh them.

There are several problems of validity associated with case study research, not least one of *face validity*. Case studies are often regarded as less rigorous, "unscientific", "subjective", "unrepresentative" and even as an "easy" research option. These prejudices

have often proved very difficult to overcome. The extent to which they are based on real rather than perceived problems requires careful analysis.

Issues of *external validity* and *generalizability* need to be addressed from the outset. The problem is best put by Mitchell (1983: 189) who argues that events involved in case studies of specific people, organizations etc., may be unique and not susceptible to generalization. This will contribute towards a lack of validity (if looked at externally) for the case study as a whole. Hammersley & Atkinson (1983) argue that only some case studies are intended to involve "typical cases". The strategy can also be used where the researcher is more interested in using a particular case to test a theory. He or she will continue to study more and more cases until satisfied that the theory holds. Finally, it is also possible to investigate cases precisely because they appear to be non-representative rather than typical. In these circumstances issues of generalizability will not be totally absent, but will appear in an indirect rather than a direct manner (non-representativeness implies an opposite pole of representativeness).

It can also be argued that for case studies *internal validity* is often more important than external. Van Lier (1988), quoted by Allwright & Bailey (1991:51) maintains that generalizability is often a secondary rather than a primary goal in case study research because "the first concern must be to analyse the data *as they are* rather than to compare them to other data to see how similar they are". In other words, (and at the risk of stating the obvious) much case study research is primarily interested in particular cases rather than generalizing from those cases to the outside world. The most important validating element in such research is internal consistency with respect to the types of data collected, the different contexts in which data is collected and the data collection and analysis procedures used. I will argue in a later section that internal rather than external validity is a more important consideration in this particular research project, and (agreeing with Allwright & Bailey) that triangulation of data collection procedures can contribute greatly towards internal validity.

Case study research is often accused of lack of rigour and it is claimed that *reliability* is therefore a problem. Yin (1994:36), while recognizing that this criticism has sometimes been well-founded, argues that solutions are available:

One prerequisite for allowing this other investigator to repeat an earlier case study is the need to document the procedures followed in the earlier case ..... In the past, case study research procedures have been poorly documented, making external reviewers suspicious of the reliability of the case study.

Yin suggests that in order to improve reliability researchers should develop *a case study protocol* containing a list of procedures and general rules for organizing the collection, reduction and analysis of data. Such a protocol is provided for this research project in sections 4-8 of this chapter.

However, the perceived lack of rigour sometimes associated with case studies and the criticism that they are "unscientific" often has more to do with the complex relationship between theory formation and research data. In the case of other research strategies, this is often more straightforward. Hammersley (1992) compares the deductive approach associated with the collection of quantitative data in (say) an experiment, with the inductive approach associated with the collection of qualitative data in (say) participant observation. In the former, the researcher tests observable data against a hypothesis or theory in an environment in which one or more variables are controlled. In the latter, hypotheses are constructed in the light of direct contact or experience and are constantly being modified, sometimes developing in unexpected directions. In the former case, the method used involves deductive logic and statistical inference: there is a strong emphasis on obtaining accurate measurements and minimizing problems of validity and reliability through careful manipulation and control of procedures. In the latter case, accurate measurements and considerations of validity and reliability are to a certain extent sacrificed in favour of depth of enquiry: the researcher gets as close as possible to the subject of the research in a more "natural", less controlled environment so that theories

can be both tested and developed . A stage beyond this kind of analytic induction lies grounded theory, as proposed by Glaser & Strauss (1967) and Strauss & Corbin (1990), in which it is suggested that researchers should go so far as to adopt a 'tabula rasa' approach before data collection in order to allow theories to develop.

Approaches which allow such deviation from the norms of 'scientific method' are also liable to charges of 'subjectivity' and 'bias'. Attempts by the researcher to get closer to the object(s) of study are seen as likely to have a strong effect on the research environment, and thus to influence research findings. This kind of argument assumes that the underlying aim of all research is to discover an 'objective truth'. It is necessary to state at the outset that research projects such as this one should in no way make claims for such objectivity. The aim is rather to present a series of subjective accounts (including that of the researcher) within a case study format. However, it should be stressed that the presentation of subjective accounts does not lessen the need for rigorous procedures for data collection and analysis, close attention to the problems of validity and reliability, and a close examination of the role of the researcher and the consequences of introducing the researcher into the research environment. In a case study research strategy, such as that which is described in the following sections, these demands can never be forgotten or ignored.

3.2. Preliminary surveys into the effects of change

In order to gain an initial impression of the attitudes of Slovak teachers towards change and the effects of change, I prepared and administered a series of interviews and a small-scale opinion survey during the period March - August 1996. The interview question schedules dealt with perceptions of changes in ELT before and after the 1989 "velvet revolution". Six individuals were interviewed according to a semi-structured format by a university department teacher trainer, Zuzana Strakova, in June 1996. Their opinions were gathered in the following areas: pre-1989 materials, methods and teacher/learner roles, post-1989 materials, methods and teacher/learner roles. Each respondent had been

involved in teacher training as well as in teaching English and had had a wide range of teaching experience both before and after 1989. Indeed, they had been deliberately chosen for their prominence within the profession, at least within the local context.

In August 1996 I also administered a survey of teacher opinions concerning change in ELT in Slovakia. This survey, in the form of a Likert-type rating scale , was aimed at a very different group of teachers. All of the 30 respondents were attending a British Council summer course for inexperienced secondary school teachers of English (although some were highly experienced teachers of Russian); all regions of Slovakia were represented within the group, as were all the different types of secondary schools where English is taught (*gymnazia*, apprentice,vocational).

The range of opinions gathered from the two very different groups of teachers who responded to the interview and the survey questions provided enough raw data to suggest that current changes in ELT in Slovakia are giving rise to a situation in which new approaches and traditional approaches are to some extent in a state of conflict . English language teachers are seemingly exposed to forces pulling in different directions as they adapt to changes in language teaching. These changes seem in turn to reflect the changing nature of the society as a whole. Although there were problems of validity and reliability in the August survey in particular, both exercises proved extremely useful in generating hypotheses which have formed the starting-point of this investigation. The interviews conducted by Strakova also served to provide a rough model for future interviews.

The findings of other local surveys have also had an influence on this research project, either directly or indirectly. A survey of the opinions of language teachers in one Slovak university department which I conducted in 1994, revealed a lack of confidence in facing new challenges (in this case the specific challenge of a new "fast-track" teacher training programme) and a growing concern about being compared with native-speaker teachers.

Another survey, which was carried out among language students (in both university language departments and several high schools) revealed that the students' perspective was very different from that of their teachers with respect to perceptions of the worth of native speaker and non-native speaker teachers. The main findings (Thomas 1995, see also Chapter 1, p.30) seemed to indicate that, far from suffering from being compared with native-speaker teachers, Slovak teachers of English language were appreciated more by their students when they were involved in some sort of team-teaching with native speaker counterparts. The main lesson to be drawn from this survey, and one which has contributed towards the current project, is that within a context of change great attention needs to be paid to different interpretations of the same events, and that nothing should be taken for granted where deep-seated attitudes are concerned. A similar message can be found in the accounts of writers from other countries of the region (see Chapter 2, section 8), who have also contributed towards the thinking which underlies this research project.

3.3. Designing and developing the research project within a case study format

Conclusions drawn from the various surveys and personal accounts detailed in the previous section greatly contributed towards determining the design details for this research project. The most important of these were as follows:

- Likert-type scales and other quantitative measures were seen to be inadequate instruments for revealing respondents' attitudes, opinions or beliefs. Although they did provide a certain amount of superficial data in such areas, certain questions always remained unanswered and impossible to verify - for example, if respondents fully understood what was being asked, if they had interpreted questions in the same way, if they were giving honest answers to the best of their ability, and so on. The biggest problem of all was the impossibility of following up particularly interesting answers, for example those which seemingly

contradicted previous answers. In such circumstances, what did respondents really mean?

- While it could be claimed that quantitative measures (such as Likert scales) were of only limited validity in some respects, their face validity was very high. The research traditions within the region attach great importance to accurate measurement and careful control of variables. It therefore seemed important to give due recognition to this fact by not relying totally on qualitative data. The ideal research design therefore needed to find room for both types of data to reinforce each other and to provide face validity for the research report.

- It was felt that where qualitative rather than quantitative data was to be collected, that there was a need to *triangulate* as much as possible, for example by matching teacher perceptions and observer perceptions of the same classroom events, or by matching teachers' opinions concerning 'best practice' with strategies actually employed by them in the classroom.

From such considerations a design model was developed on the following lines:-

Fig.1. Categorization of data collection sources

Background data	Official documents Survey questionnaire ⇨⇨ Interviews	RESEARCH
Primary data	Teacher focus groups ⇨⇨ Class observations	OUTCOMES

Background data

The first aim of this type of data was to provide descriptive background information for Slovakia which was unavailable elsewhere. The type of questions to be addressed included:-

* How much English is taught by state schools in each region?
* How many English language teachers are currently working in these schools?
* What level of qualifications and experience do such teachers have?
* What English language coursebooks are currently in use in schools?
* What percentage of coursebooks are locally produced or imported from the UK?

The sources available to answer such questions were seemingly limited to the following:-

* Official documents produced by the SPU *(Statny Pedagogicka Ustov)*, a branch of the Ministry of Education and the Slovak Statistics Office, for updated figures on school and teacher numbers
* Official documents produced by the three regional *Metodicke Centra* for information concerning teacher qualifications and experience
* Unprocessed data collected by the Department of English, Presov University, for information concerning coursebook use in the East Slovak region (Prcikova 1996)

To add to these sources of information a survey questionnaire was produced for the Central/West Slovak regions on the following lines:-

A survey of international and locally-produced ELT coursebook materials currently in use in Central and West Slovakia. This entailed contacting teachers of English in these regions via their schools and asking open-ended/ multiple-choice questions (based on those above).

Summary of survey questionnaire

Proposed target respondents:	1. Experienced basic school teachers (2 years+ EFL experience) 2. Inexperienced basic school teachers 3. Experienced secondary school teachers 4. Inexperienced secondary teachers 5. Requalifying teachers
Dependent variables:	- Coursebooks used
Other variables to consider:	- Native or non-native speaker teacher - Age group - Sex - Teaching qualifications - Location of school - Type of school
Main outcomes:	- Descriptive data on coursebooks used - Pool of potential focus group interviewees

A second aim was to collect from various sources as much explanatory background information as possible concerning current approaches to English language teaching which may influence choice of coursebook and teaching methods used. The type of questions to be addressed included:-

* What approaches to language teaching were regarded as forming the basis of 'best practice' in the pre-1989 period in Slovakia?
* How have approaches to language teaching changed in the post-1989 period?
* What have been the main effects of these changes on teachers, students and institutions?

The sources available to answer such questions included the following:-

* Official documents produced by the SPU (Ministry of Education), SAUA/SATE (Slovak Teachers' Association), University English Language Departments.

* Official documents produced by outside organizations (eg The British Council, USIS) working within the Slovak educational context

The following sources of data (based on Strakova 1996) were added to this list:-

* *Interviews with local textbook authors, academics and other experienced practitioners*
* *Interviews with outside 'experts' with experience of the Slovak and regional context*

Summary of interviews

Interviewees	Educational specialists in Slovakia; outside 'experts' with experience of the Slovak and regional context
Interview aims	To collect a range of opinions which will contribute towards an understanding of the effects of changes in ELT in Slovakia
Main outcomes	A collection of opinions which can be compared and contrasted with those of Slovak teachers

Primary data

This stage of the data collection process began to address the main concerns of the research project in some depth. The aim was to provide a platform for the perspectives of English language teachers and to explore teacher attitudes towards methodological change in the post-1989 period. The type of questions to be answered included:-

* What are teachers' general impressions of their coursebook materials?
* Is there enough support available for using new coursebook materials?
* Do teachers feel that they are successful in their teaching?
* Is English language teaching becoming easier or more difficult?
* What are the main changes taking place in English language teaching?
* Are such changes to be regarded as mainly positive or negative?
* Do teachers feel adequately prepared for such changes?

The instrument chosen for collecting such data was as follows:-

A survey of teacher attitudes and opinions concerning new trends in English language teaching and new (imported) materials compared with those considered to be more 'traditional'. This entailed organizing a series of focus groups in different regions in which teachers were asked to discuss a schedule of questions, but were not obliged to reach a consensus concerning the answers

Summary of focus group interviews

Respondent groups	1. Basic/secondary teachers from different schools 2. Basic/secondary teachers from the same school 3. Requalifying teachers
Focus group aims	- To explore opinions on a range of issues related to teaching approaches, materials and methods - To provide in-depth data to add to findings of the survey questionnaire - To provide a lead-in for class observation schedules
Main outcomes	- Richer data on teacher attitudes than that obtainable from surveys - Useful input for ongoing INSETT and PRESETT programmes

The final stage of the data collection process aimed through classroom observations in designated schools to analyse further some of the attitudes and opinions expressed by teachers, and to provide data which would help examine the implications of such opinions for everyday classroom practice. Questions to be addressed at this stage included:-

* How do different teachers adapt/supplement coursebook materials for classroom use?
* What is the thinking behind such modifications to the 'coursebook-led syllabus'?
* To what extent are coursebook materials compatible with other demands of the teaching syllabus such as oral assessment and examinations?
* To what extent do changes in materials bring about changes in classroom practice?
* Do teachers believe that different teaching methods have some bearing on pupil success rates, or are other considerations more important?

* What practical support is available for coping with new materials and methods?
* Is such support adequate for different teachers' needs?

The instruments chosen for addressing such questions were as follows:-

A series of lesson observations involving teachers who had already participated in focus group interviews, scheduled to take place within two designated schools, one in Central and one in Eastern Slovakia and within a designated week of lessons. Each observation was to be preceded by an informal discussion between the researcher/observer and the teacher. Each was to be followed by an informal round-up discussion. To limit the amount of data collected to a manageable size, no audio recordings were to be made of the lessons being observed or of the lesson discussions: instead, reliance was to be placed on observer's notes . A further option was for the researcher, working as a temporary member of staff in one of the designated schools, to team-teach with and to be observed by Slovak colleagues and for these sessions to be followed by post-lesson discussions.

Summary of classroom observations/school visits

Pre-lesson discussion schedule aims	Pre-lesson discussions between teacher and researcher cover lesson planning, choice of materials and potential problem areas
Observation schedule aims	Class visits by observer/researcher serve as the basis for detailed analysis via observer notes
Post-lesson discussion schedule aims	Post-lesson discussions between teacher and researcher cover problem areas within lesson materials, lesson planning and teaching methods
Main outcomes	- Teachers' recorded comments on their own teaching methods, use of materials and preferred teaching styles - Exploration of the relationship between teachers' attitudes/opinions and observable classroom practice - Potential input for future INSETT programmes

3.4. Rationale for the survey questionnaire

The survey questionnaire was the first source of original data within the project design. As specified in previous sections, it aimed to produce various types of statistics from which inferences could be made, providing valuable background information which was unavailable from any other source. The main aim was to describe the current situation of English language teaching within each of the three main regions of Slovakia: Western Slovakia (including Bratislava), Central Slovakia and Eastern Slovakia. The type of data sought after is summarized in Section 3.3., p.89.

The full text of the questionnaire, (presented in Appendix B in its English version) , was designed with various considerations in mind. The first was to obtain descriptive rather than analytic data, and to ensure that no answers required value judgements (question 9 concerning coursebook suitability is the only exception). Dillman (1978) quoted by de Vaus (1986:80-1) distinguishes between four distinct types of question content in questionnaire construction: behaviour, beliefs, attitudes and attributes. While other stages of data collection in this project were interested in the first three of these, the survey questionnaire concentrated on attributes, including respondent characteristics (age, sex, teaching experience, qualifications), school characteristics (type of school, location) and coursebook characteristics (locally/internationally produced etc.).

According to Oppenheim (1992:12) the purpose of a descriptive survey is to count. "When it cannot count everyone, it counts a representative sample, and then makes inferences about the population as a whole". Perhaps it is a little too simplistic to suggest that this particular survey was merely concerned with counting numbers of teachers, schools and coursebooks used. But it could not really be classified as an *analytic* survey either (ibid.: 21), although it could be argued that it provided scope for establishing associative (rather than causal) relationships between some of its variables. Perhaps it is closest in nature to a 'fact-finding' survey, seeking to uncover information which may throw light on other kinds of data collected separately.

Another consideration in the design of the survey was the question of sampling. It can be argued that because the aim of the survey was to inform rather than to provide evidence to prove/disprove a hypothesis, sampling issues were not really of central importance. No attempt was made to define a representative sample of a wider population of teachers and schools; instead attempts were made (through the system of regional *Metodicke Centra)* to reach as many state schools as possible in each region. All teachers involved in English teaching within each school were invited to complete the survey. The sample of replies thus obtained may well have favoured a certain type of school or teacher, and in no way can claim to be entirely representative of *all* schools in that region. Nevertheless, the findings were able to help contribute towards a "snapshot picture" of what was happening in many schools at a regional (and subsequently a national) level.

A final point which needs to be mentioned is the way in which survey questions were presented. It should be noted that the version of the questionnaire distributed to schools was in every case a Slovak version . While every attempt was made to translate the questions accurately into Slovak, it is recognized that the act of translating could have sometimes introduced subtle nuances into certain questions, which were not there in the original English version. It is hoped that any slight differences in this respect are of less significance in a descriptive survey, where questions and answers tend to be factual and not of an interpretative nature.

The information obtained from the survey in each region was compiled on a database containing different fields such as 'type of school', 'age'/'sex'/'qualifications' of teachers, 'years of ELT experience', 'grades taught', 'number of hours taught weekly' and 'main coursebooks used'. From the database information patterns of data could then be detected, linking (say) certain types of coursebooks with certain types of schools or geographical location of schools. Such information from schools in all parts of Slovakia is potentially of great significance in its ability to help clarify the findings from qualitative data.

3.5. Rationale for interviews with experienced practitioners

As stated in section 3.3, the aim of these interviews was to build on the results obtained from interviews designed by Thomas and Strakova, and conducted by Strakova in 1996. These had followed a semi-structured format, inviting respondents to comment on educational change, comparing ELT approaches, materials and methods in the pre-1989 and post-1989 periods, but allowing flexibility in follow-up questions in each area.

The range of potential interviewees considered by this research project was much wider than that of 1996. Possible Slovak interviewees considered included local textbook writers, university professors, heads of university language departments in both the more traditional Philosophical Faculties and less traditional Pedagogical Faculties, *Metodicke Centra* teacher trainers and representatives of the SAUA/SATE language teachers' union. Possible non-Slovak interviewees considered included visiting academics and consultants, ELT project managers in the UK and Slovakia, ELT authors and non-Slovak teacher trainers working in the region.

Because of this diversity an inflexible question schedule was considered to be inappropriate. Instead it was decided that the range of interviews focus on certain topics, with some interviewees being asked to concentrate more than others on specific choices. The topic areas suggested (with sample questions) were as follows:-

* *Educational change*
Since 1989 and the fall of communism, what have been the main effects of closer contact between East/Central Europe and the West in the context of ELT?

* *Educational traditions*
How do educational traditions of the East/Central European region differ from those of the UK? What are the main tensions between tradition and change?

* *Linguistics traditions*
What kind of influence have regional schools of thought (such as the Prague school) had on the teaching of languages?

* *ELT projects*
What has been the track record of ELT projects in the region in the post-1989 period?
What should be the main focus of ELT projects in the future?

And the original 1996 topics were also included once again:-

* *ELT coursebook materials and methods*
What have been the major changes in coursebook materials after 1989?
What have been the major changes in ELT methods?
What have been the effects of such changes?
How have the roles of teachers and learners changed?

As with the information gained from studying official documents and from the answers to the survey questionnaire, the intention was that the ideas obtained from these interviews should help to inform the rest of the survey and, in particular, help with the analysis of the primary data discussed in the next two sections.

3.6. Rationale for focus group interviews

According to Krueger (1994:6), a focus group interview is ....

.... a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, nonthreatening environment. It is conducted with approximately 7 to 10 people by a skilled interviewer. The discussion is comfortable and often enjoyable for participants as they share their ideas and perceptions. Group members influence each other by responding to ideas and comments in the discussion.

In this research project a group interview format was preferred mainly for reasons given within this one quotation. The "permissive, nonthreatening environment" mentioned by Krueger is important for interviews that seek to explore the opinions of participants. It should also be noted that focus groups differ from other discussion formats (such as brainstorming groups) in that there is no requirement to reach a consensus: exploring the issues is more important than reaching definite conclusions.

If group interviews are to encourage participants to explore their feelings and opinions concerning specific issues it is important that the experience should be relaxing and enjoyable. Too often one-to-one interviewing situations can be interpreted as "interrogation" where all the initiative, and ultimately the power, rests with the interviewer (although Block 1995 notes that the interviewee too has a kind of power - the ability to subvert the interviewer's agenda).

The dynamics of the focus group interview are completely different, with the interviewer tending to dominate less because of the unlimited possibilities for interaction between participants and in which the interviewer is not directly involved. Stewart and Shamdasani (1990:13) suggest that this has a considerable effect on the data which is obtained, with *emic* data (arising in natural form) replacing *etic* data (influenced by the researcher or the environment), to use terms coined by Krippendorf (1980). Because the interviewer is often able to take a back seat during the discussion, the atmosphere can resemble that of a 'social event' rather than a formal interview.

Another feature of focus group interviews that seemed highly attractive from the point of view of this research project is that they allow participants space and flexibility in various ways. First of all they allow the right of silence. Whereas in a one-to-one situation the interviewee feels the need to respond to questions (even if it is only a shake of the head or a simple negative), participants in focus groups for the most part reserve the right to speak when they are ready to do so. There is also less likelihood of participants producing formulaic or set replies. Many one-to-one interview situations assume that participants will have already adopted some kind of stance or point of view on the issues to be discussed, whereas the opposite may be the case: this has the effect of forcing the interviewee to adopt a point of view during the interview, which, on reflection may not represent his/her true feelings. The focus group format not only allows participants the opportunity to develop a point of view during the discussion, but actually encourages them to influence each other without demanding any sort of consensus.

To summarize, focus groups provide a format which is less directive than even many unstructured one-to-one interviews. They also provide a more sociable and less artificial forum for exchanging ideas which is far removed from the stereotyped perception of the one-to-one situation (as in job interviews, oral examinations etc.). As such, they can serve as a suitable instrument for exploring teachers attitudes and opinions without forcing them to take up any sort of stance if they do not wish to do so on specific issues. Stewart and Shamdasani (1990:15) suggest that :-

Focus groups may be useful at virtually any point in a research program , but they are particularly useful for exploratory research where rather little is known about the phenomenon of interest.

Other advantages of the format are mentioned by Krueger (1994:32) who argues that focus groups "have high face validity, which is due in large part to the believability of comments from participants". It is suggested that sometimes this face validity may even be too high, causing decision makers to rush out and implement some of their findings without due reflection. Focus groups are also a relatively inexpensive and speedy way of gathering data. Finally, the group format very often allows the researcher to obtain a larger sample of opinions than would otherwise be obtainable with the same number of individual interviews.

The problematic aspects of focus groups are discussed by Stewart & Shamdasani (1990:16-17) and other writers. The problems can be summarized as follows: the role of the moderator, group dynamics, unrepresentative groups, volume of data, translation of data. In each case, ways of alleviating the problem area need to be discussed.

Focus groups normally involve a moderator who leads the discussion following a schedule of questions which should be covered, prompting participants when they stray too far from the discussion agenda, or when they seem to be very hesitant about making a contribution, or their contribution requires clarification. An assistant moderator is also

usually present to record the discussion (on audio tape) and to take notes. The moderator's role is very complex and requires a skilled person to encourage people to join in focussed discussion. Some of the mistakes that can be made include over-dominating the discussion, influencing the opinions of participants in more subtle ways (eg negative/positive body language), insufficient probing when answers are unclear, insufficient prompting when some participants make no contributions at all, inadvertently providing cues for answers, poor time management. Another problem is when different moderators conduct interviews within a series: achieving compatibility of moderating style is extremely difficult. Finally the status and image of the moderator may affect the outcome of discussions: the relationship between moderator and interviewees outside the focus group, the moderator's age, sex and even dress may all need to be taken into consideration.

A general rule would be to try to match moderators with the focus group as far as possible, choosing a teacher (rather than a high-status academic) to interview teachers, a woman to interview women, a younger person to interview a younger group. Nationality is also important: non-native speaker teachers may well react differently to a native speaker moderator. The initial aim in this research project was always to conduct focus group interviews in Slovak with Slovak moderators wherever this was practicable.

The other means of anticipating moderator-related problems is to ensure that the technique is very carefully piloted and that moderators gain some previous experience in conducting focus group interviews. In the case of this research project, two piloting operations were undertaken, the first trying out the technique itself with a completely different subject matter, the second trying out a draft version of the intended question schedule (see p.102).

The next set of problems commonly associated with focus groups are to do with the make-up of the groups themselves. First of all, the dynamics of group interaction may be

strongly affected by any of the following: dominant individuals, individuals who arrive with their own idiosyncratic agenda, rival factions within the group, low and high status individuals within the same group. The obvious remedy for such problems is careful selection of participants, and, if possible, some sort of participant screening (written, over the telephone or face-to-face). However, even the best screening procedures can still fail to spot 'problem' individuals: skilled moderation is once again needed to manage the dynamics of group interaction without intervening in too directive a fashion.

A further problem concerns the question of how representative the views of a particular group may be of a larger population of teachers. Although the main aim in this project was not to draw general conclusions which would be true of all or most Slovak teachers, it was still considered desirable to aim for *some* level of representativeness of a wider population. Since this was the case, it became important to find ways of identifying possible 'rogue groups', which would then be considered completely untypical. The best solution seemed to be to hold a *series* of focus groups within a limited period of time rather than occasional 'one-off' interviews.

The final set of problems is to do with the data obtained from focus groups, both in terms of its volume and its complexity. For one hour of interviewing time at least 30 pages of transcript can be anticipated. For a series of focus groups this can mean hundreds of pages of raw data to be processed and analysed. An added difficulty can be the requirement to translate from one language into another, thus doubling the time involved.

In the case of this research project it was felt that little could be done to address the problem of volume of data apart from considering the option of partial transcripts or reliance on assistant moderator notes rather than full transcripts. But since the aim of notes and partial transcripts should really be to *confirm* the main points made in a focus group interview, this option was rejected. One more practical step that did eventually suggest itself, however, was to reduce the number of participants in each focus group.

It was felt that this would have several immediate effects: firstly, it would be easier to process who said what when transcribing from the recording; secondly, a reduced number of participants could (although not necessarily) bring about a reduction in the volume of comments which needed to be transcribed. Accordingly, the normal recommended number of participants for focus group interviews (see Krueger, Stewart & Shamdasani) was reduced from 7-10 to a more manageable 4-6. This change also had the practical effect of allowing focus groups to take place among teaching staff in designated schools where there were fewer than 7 teachers of English.

Having discussed the merits and drawbacks of the focus group format, we may now turn our attention to the interview schedule itself and to the modifications made after piloting. The original schedule (in slightly modified form) is reproduced overleaf. The piloting exercise involved a small group of four English teacher trainees at the University of Presov (Six people were invited, but two failed to attend - a common hazard with focus groups). The interview for this piloting exercise was conducted in English with myself acting as moderator and Zuzana Strakova (moderator in previous piloting exercises in Slovak) acting as assistant moderator. The discussion lasted for 48 minutes. The joint feedback on the session was as follows:

The moderator
* Tended to talk too much and to be over-directive ("I want you to think about ....")
* Tended to jump in too quickly. (Over concern for time management)
* Tended to reinforce correct behaviour, indicating when a response seemed highly satisfactory ("Yes, that's right").

The assistant moderator
* Needed to concentrate more on attributing opinions and quotes to individuals rather than trying to summarize a perceived consensus opinion ("They felt that ...").

The question schedule
* Seemed to follow a good logical progression with questions following naturally
* Tended to put the key questions which require detailed answers too near the end. The result was too little time and energy spent on the key questions.
* Some of the items (such as question 6) seemed to be leading

* Some of the items (such as questions 4 & 5) could only really be answered with reference to actual coursebooks and not from memory. It was felt that participants should be asked to bring coursebook materials to future focus groups.
* The prompt card used with question 8 proved too directive

This was the question schedule used for the piloting:-

Q1 *Introduce yourself to the group*
What kind of school do you teach in ? What town is it situated in?
How long have you been teaching there?

Q2 *How long have you been an English teacher?*
How much English language teaching experience do you have?
How much teaching experience in other subjects?
Did you switch to English teaching from other subjects? For what reasons?

Q3 *How would you describe your work (at your school)?*
Do you enjoy it? Do you feel that you are successful?
Do you feel appreciated? By pupils? By colleagues? By the school?
Do you receive enough support for your work? From whom?

Q4 *What coursebook materials have you brought to the discussion group?*
How long have you been using them? Are they the only materials you use?
Who chose the materials? Were you consulted when the choice was made?
Were the materials designed with Slovak students in mind?

Q5 *What are your general impressions of these materials?*
What do you think of layout and presentation, topic areas, language syllabus, language level, suitability for the age group?
Are the materials appropriate for Slovak students?

Q6 *When you teach lessons based on coursebooks do you omit texts/activities? Which?*
Do you sometimes need to change existing texts/activities? In what ways?
What kinds of new texts/activities (if any) do you find you have to add?
What kinds of extra materials (if any) do you need to prepare?

Q7 *What do you think of the coursebook teacher's guide?*
Are the ideas suggested in teacher's guides always suitable for your students?
Do you regularly use the teacher's guide to help plan lessons?
Do you prefer different teaching methods to those suggested in teacher guides?
What elements do you think are missing from teacher's guides?

Q8 *Based on your past experience, what do you consider to be the characteristics of a successful coursebook?*
With respect to content? With respect to language? With respect to organization and presentation?

Q9 *Is teaching English becoming easier or more difficult? For what reasons?*
How would you describe the main changes which are taking place in ELT in Slovakia? Are the changes mostly positive or negative in your opinion? Explain. Do you feel adequately prepared for the changes which are taking place?

Q10 *Let's summarize the main points. Is that a reliable summary of what was said?*
Are there any final thoughts on any of the topics? Have we missed anything?

The revised version of the focus group question schedule, incorporating various changes suggested by this piloting exercise can be found in Chapter 6, p.156.

3.7. Rationale for lesson observations and pre/post-lesson discussions

The final stage of data collection was very much connected with the outcome of focus group interviews and cannot be entirely separated from them. The aim was to follow up some of the focus group discussions (in two designated schools in different regions) with a series of lesson observations and one-to-one interviews with teachers. From the teacher's point of view, having had an opportunity to explore attitudes to educational changes within the focus group forum, there was then an opportunity to consider the practical implications of such changes in greater depth. From the researcher's point of view, opinions expressed in focus group interviews could be made more meaningful in the light of the day-to-day classroom experiences of the teachers involved. (For example, if a teacher claimed to be in favour of a 'communicative' approach to teaching English and less in favour of 'more traditional' approaches, what did these opinions actually mean in practice?) There was also an opportunity to compare expressed attitudes with methodological choices made in the planning, preparation and teaching of lessons. This is the approach adopted by Karavas-Doukas (1995) in her survey of Greek schools on the receiving end of imposed methodological innovations.

In adopting this kind of approach, the context of data collection was deliberately changed from outside the class to focus more on the classroom environment . However the

research should be considered as "classroom-oriented" rather than "classroom-based" (Nunan 1992a:103) since the main focus of this stage of the research was still the teacher, rather than (say) patterns of interaction in the class, or students' learning styles. The interviews with teachers before and after their lessons were in many ways as important as the findings from classroom observations and were part of a process which is close to the idea of action research as described by Crookes (1993), where "unexamined assumptions embodied in the status quo" are questioned and carefully analysed. An underlying aim was thus to question accepted norms of classroom practice in the light of teachers' deepseated opinions. It was also hoped that the reflections of teachers on their lesson planning and teaching could contribute towards a debate which would inform future teacher development initiatives, thus addressing the collaborative aims of the project (see Introduction, p.8).

The *pre-lesson discussions* looked at the aims of the lesson, the constraints which affected lesson planning, the type of coursebook materials being used and the teachers' opinion of these, plus any modifications which had been made to the underlying coursebook methodology (comparing the teacher's lesson plan with suggestions in teacher book notes). These discussions were informal in nature with no particular sequence of questions for the researcher to follow. However they were based around questions suggested by topics already mentioned. Answers were recorded in the observer's notes.

The *lesson observations* focussed on the implementation of each teacher's lesson plan, which could then be compared with the teaching ideas given in the coursebook teachers' book. A prime objective was to see how books such as "Discoveries", "Hotline" or "Project English" were being built into the local teaching syllabus and how the demands of the syllabus conflicted with those of the coursebook methodology. Another focus for observations was to take account of teachers' individual solutions to such sources of conflict and their ability to achieve such solutions independently. It was suggested in the

introduction to this research project (see p.7) that some individuals will have welcomed the challenges of new approaches and would succeed in integrating new ideas (eg project work) into their syllabus on the basis of their own enthusiasm. The observations aimed to show whether there is any evidence to support such a hypothesis, and whether less confident and adventurous teachers are experiencing more complications and frustration in this respect.

In order to reflect such concerns, a lesson observation sheet (see Appendix C) was designed, which had columns with headings such as "stage of the lesson", "activities", "materials used from the coursebook", "teachers' own materials", "problem points for materials/activities", "teacher solutions and follow-up ideas", "post-lesson teacher comments". The observation sheet was of original design since no ready-made example seemed to suit the exact needs of this type of exercise.

It will already have been noted that the observation sheet had a column for "post-lesson teacher comments". The starting-point for the *post-lesson discussion* was for the teacher and the researcher to examine difficulties posed by the teaching materials or suggested methods and solutions adopted. In effect the teacher provided a 'running commentary' for certain stages of the lesson. The aim was that discussion of detailed lesson points should develop into a more general discussion of what strategies are needed to overcome such problem areas, and to what extent individual teachers should be expected to achieve this without receiving any outside support. Finally, if it was felt that some outside support is needed, the discussion could focus on what form this should take.

The intended outcomes of this stage of the research process can be summarized as follows:-

- Exploring the relationship between teachers' opinions and observable classroom practice using the methods described above could provide detailed evidence on

how well teachers (in two schools at least) are coping with the effects of change.

- Teachers' comments on their own teaching methods, use of materials and preferred teaching styles could give evidence of solutions adopted to alleviate problems of change

- Teachers' comments on the support which they felt they needed could influence potential input for future INSETT programmes and other local teacher development initiatives.

3.8. Rationale for data processing, analysis and reporting

From the beginning it was clear that a research project such as this one, relying on different kinds of information and ideas gathered from documents, questionnaires, interviews and class observations, and working in two different languages (English and Slovak), would necessarily generate a large volume of both quantitative and qualitative unprocessed data for reduction, cross-referencing and analysis. This included the following examples:-

Data from documents

Official statistics concerning teachers and schools

Syllabus and assessment specifications for schools; school-leaver profiles

Data from survey questionnaires

Statistics concerning coursebook use, levels of qualifications and experience of teachers

Data from interviews

A range of opinions from Slovak and non-Slovak educational specialists concerning the effects of educational change on Slovak teachers.

Data from focus groups

The personal accounts of Slovak teachers concerning their experience of and attitude towards educational change.

Data from class observations

Observer's notes detailing problems which teachers encountered in managing educational change, as well as the strategies which they used to overcome such problems.

It should be noted that the distinction made between qualitative and quantitative data in the context of this research project is that proposed by Miles & Huberman (1994:9), where 'qualitative' means 'non-numerical', data "in the form of words - that is, language in the form of extended text". It is interesting to note that data collection methods, such as interviews and observations, which are normally considered to be primarily qualitative in nature, can also be expected to yield quantitative information. Miles and Huberman (ibid: 40) stress the importance of linking both types of data. More specifically, involving both types of data through a process of *triangulation* will enable them to mutually support and strengthen each other, contributing towards the validity of the data collection and analysis process (see section 1).

In this research project it was clear that the volume of triangulated data generated needed to be reduced in some meaningful way, so that it could be conveniently stored and processed. It was decided that the data would be stored as follows:

* Statistical tables and charts based on document and questionnaire analysis
* Audio recordings of interviews and focus groups
* Transcripts of interviews, focus groups and pre-lesson/post-lesson discussions
* Assistant moderator's notes for focus groups
* Observer's notes for class visits and/or completed observation sheets
* School visit journal entries

These storage formats contained a mix of data which could still be considered 'original' or raw (audio recordings) and reduced or 'semi-processed' (notes, journal entries). In between came the transcripts, which could be considered close to 'original, raw data', but, as Cook (1995:38) points out , lack important contextual features which remain unmentioned in speech.

Although data reduction and processing had already (by necessity) begun in using such storage formats, further reduction and processing were needed before the data was in a form suitable for the kind of analysis which was intended. In the case of focus group data , it was felt initially that this could entail collating information from the transcript and assistant moderator notes concerning responses to specific questions, as in the following example:-

Question 9	Respondent	Response	Observer's notes
How would you describe the main changes taking place in ELT in Slovakia?	D.	The books we get seem to change every year ..... they are more complicated than the ones we used to use. Students want to learn grammar, but the books don't really teach it	Seemed genuinely annoyed about having to use new books all the time, (unlike teachers of other subjects at her school ?)

Eventually, however, it was decided that the main strategy for data reduction and analysis in this project should be through the creation of *categories* based on themes which related directly to research aims, questions and hypotheses. Chapter 8, section 1 discusses in detail how such categories can not only be created, but can also be allowed to emerge from the different types of collected data. In the meantime Chapters 4 to 7 present the data itself with initial commentary.

3.9. The case study data collection schedule

This chapter concludes with an overall administrative schedule of the case study as it took place, with events listed in chronological order. At the same time, key events are also cross-referenced to the four main data collection exercises, labelled as follows:

Part a: survey questionnaire
Part b: interviews
Part c: focus groups
Part d: lesson observations & school visit journals

References are also made in the schedule to the collection of documents (such as syllabus specifications and tests) which supported the main data collection process. Finally, the schedule also gives details of collaboration with Slovak (and sometimes non-Slovak) partners whose full details are provided in Appendix D; the implications of this partnership are examined in the next four chapters.

Dec. 1996:	Part a: Materials & methods questionnaire sent (by M.Prcikova) to schools in E.Slovakia. Seen as a piloting exercise for future surveys of this kind.
Feb. 1997:	Part c: Focus group technique piloted in Presov (by Z.Strakova, M. Prcikova) Focus group interview technique piloted in Banska Bystrica (by M. Houten)
Apr. 1997:	Part a: 1st draft of coursebook materials questionnaire prepared and sent to Slovakia for translation. Part c: Presentation at IATEFL Brighton of pilot focus group findings. (with M.Prcikova, Z.Strakova)
May 1997:	First fieldwork trip to Slovakia. Part a: Redrafting of materials questionnaire (with Eva Homolova) Part a: Collection and processing of data from Prcikova Dec.1996 survey. Part c: Redrafting of focus group questions in Slovak & English (with Z.Strakova) Pilot focus group with new questions in Presov (Z.Strakova assistant moderator) Part d: Initial contacts with first designated school for interviews & observations.

(Gymnazium Raymana, Presov)

June 1997 — Part a: Administration of materials questionnaire (Metodicke Centrum, B.Bystrica)
Part b: Interview with Prof.H.Widdowson. (academic & writer)

July 1997: — Part a: Processing of C.Slovakia materials questionnaire data.

Oct 1997: — Part b: Arrangement of interviews with Slovak ELT specialists
Part c: Arrangement of focus group interview schedules with designated schools
Final drafting of focus group questions after piloting analysis
Part d: Arrangement of lesson observation schedules with designated schools

Nov 1997: — Second fieldwork trip to Slovakia
Part a: Arrangement for administration of questionnaire in West Slovakia.
Part b: Interview with Prof. Eva Tandlichova (textbook writer & academic)
Interview with PhDr. Kamil Dovciak (head of university dept)
Part c: First focus group interview (Basic Schools, Banska Bystrica)
Second focus group interview (Dolny Kubin gymnazium)
Part d: Lesson observations & journal (Dolny Kubin gymnazium)

Mar 1998: — Third fieldwork visit to Slovakia
Part a: Collection of statistics to support survey results
Part b: Interview with PhDr Rita Rafajlovicova (academic & testing specialist)
Collection of tests & test specification documents to support the interview.
Part c: Third focus group interview (Raymana gymnazium, Presov)
Fourth focus group interview (Secondary school teachers, Kosice)
Part d: Lesson observations & journal (Raymana gymnazium)
Collection of syllabus specification documents to support the observations.

Apr 1998: — Part b: Interview with Ingrid Freebairn (ELT author)
Collection of publishers' materials to support the interview.

May 1998: — Part b: Interview with Nick Butler (British Council ELT projects officer)
Collection of British Council project documents to support the interview.

Oct 1998: — Par a: Administration of materials survey in W.Slovakia (by T.Phillips)

CHAPTER 4: THE CASE STUDY REPORT - SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

This chapter and the next three concentrate on the reporting of the case study data collected within this research project, beginning with the survey questionnaire. The questionnaire (see Chapter 3.3.) aimed at providing a very general profile of English language teaching in Slovakia, producing detailed information concerning the qualifications, age group and years of experience of English language teachers, as well as information concerning use of coursebook materials. The survey was carried out because of the lack of relevant official data available from the Ministry of Education and *Metodicke Centra* for the period in question. (see also Ch.1, p.24-6).

In December 1996 Prcikova completed her survey of ELT coursebook materials used by schools in Eastern Slovakia, pointing the way for questionnaires for other regions of the country. In the two subsequent years a questionnaire of very similar type was sent to Central and Western Slovakian schools. (The English version of this appears in Appendix B.) Prcikova's questionnaire for East Slovakia had originally been intended to focus only on school policy concerning coursebook choice, being less interested in providing profiles of individual teachers. The version sent to the other two regions of the country, on the other hand, also aimed to provide a profile of all the individual respondents with respect to their sex, age group, qualifications and ELT experience, as well as the grades and number of hours per week taught, components of the coursebook package used, and so on. For the purposes of this report, and in order to provide a better balance between the data from Prcikova's survey and that of the other two regions, only the results obtained from some of the questions have been published here in summarized form. For convenience, the questions have been re-numbered from the original questionnaire with, for example, question C13 (location of the school) becoming question 1 in this report. The questionnaires were administered as follows:-

E.Slovakia. Date: December 1996 (Prcikova survey)
105 replies received of which 41 (Basic schools), 18 (Gymnazia), 46 (Other)

C.Slovakia. Deadline: July 1997
86 replies received of which 37 (Basic), 31 (Gymnazia), 18 (Other)

W.Slovakia. Deadline: October 1998
51 replies received of which 18 (Basic), 18 (Gymnazia), 15 (Other)

For the purposes of the report and to achieve a more meaningful analysis of the data collected from the different types of schools, these have been divided into three categories in all of the tables presented in the rest of this section. Category 1 includes all basic (primary) schools; category 2 includes the more academic secondary schools, the *4-year gymnazia* (grammar schools) and *8-year gymnazia* (special grammar schools); category 3 includes other types of secondary schools, in other words *SOS* (vocational schools) such as o*bchodna akademia* (business schools), *hotelova akademia* (catering schools), *SPS* (technical schools) and *SOU* (apprentice schools). It should be noted that for the purposes of the survey, only coursebooks used in grades 1-4 of the secondary schools (and not in the preparatory *prima* and *sekunda* classes of the 8-year gymnazia) have been included. Similarly, the figures for basic schools include only grades 5-8, the junior grades, leaving out any information concerning coursebooks used with much younger children, since not all basic schools offer English classes for this age group.

The first question in this report concerns the location of schools. Only six Slovak cities or towns contain more than 80,000 inhabitants and therefore qualify as "main towns". They are Bratislava, Nitra (W.Slovakia), Banska Bystrica, Zilina (C.Slovakia), Kosice, Presov (E.Slovakia).

Q1. Location of respondents' school
(Main towns = 80,000+ , Smaller towns = 10,000+)

Region & type of school	*ESk. Basic*	*ESk. Gym*	*ESk Other*	*CSk Basic*	*CSk Gym*	*CSk Other*	*WSk Basic*	*WS Gym*	*WSk Other*
Main towns	9	5	17	15	1	1	13	7	6
Smallertowns	20	8	27	12	29	15	1	8	6
Villages	12	5	2	10	1	2	4	3	3
Total:	*41*	*18*	*46*	37	*31*	*18*	*18*	*18*	15

All regions: Main town respondents: 31%
Smaller Town respondents: 52%
Village School respondents: 17%

The breakdown of respondents according to the towns where they work reveals some inconsistencies from region to region. In Central Slovakia there seem to have been very few replies from teachers at secondary schools in the main towns of Banska Bystrica and Zilina, although basic schools from these towns were well represented. On the other hand, in the other two regions main towns were better represented, especially in Western Slovakia where most basic school respondents were living and working in Bratislava.

Q2. Numbers of male and female respondents

Region & type of school	*ESk. Basic*	*ESk. Gym*	*ESk Other*	*CSk Basic*	*CSk Gym*	*CSk Other*	*WSk Basic*	*WS Gym*	*WSk Other*
Male	n/a.	n/a.	n/a.	1	3	2	0	0	0
Female	n/a.	n/a.	n/a.	36	28	16	18	18	15
Total:	*41*	*18*	*46*	37	*31*	*18*	*18*	*18*	*15*

No details available for E.Slovakia. Overall figures are for C & W.Slovakia

It should be noted that when considering the male/female ratio of respondents there are only two regions to compare, Central and Western Slovakia, since the Prcikova survey in the East did not ask respondents to specify their sex. The numbers of male respondents for C.Slovakia can be regarded as fairly typical for the whole country. Figures for W.Slovakia, where no males responded, are clearly unrepresentative.

Overall percentages for the two regions:

Male respondents	4%
Female respondents	96%

Q3. Respondent age band.

Region & type of school	*ESk. Basic*	*ESk. Gym*	*ESk Other*	*CSk Basic*	*CSk Gym*	*CSk Other*	*WSk Basic*	*WS Gym*	*WSk Other*
18-25	n/a.	n/a.	n/a.	1	2	1	3	4	0
26-30	n/a	n/a.	n/a.	3	3	2	2	4	4
31-40	n/a.	n/a.	n/a.	10	8	9	6	3	4
41-50	n/a.	n/a.	n/a.	22	17	4	5	7	6
50+	n/a.	n/a.	n/a.	1	1	2	2	0	1
Total:	*41*	*18*	*46*	*37*	*31*	*18*	*18*	*18*	*15*

No details available for E.Slovakia. Overall figures are for C & W.Slovakia

It seems from these figures that few younger teachers in Central and Western Slovakia responded to the survey, in fact only 8% in the 18-25 age bracket overall, although this percentage was much higher for the West. The largest group of respondents by far, 45%, were aged 41-50. In Central Slovakia this age group was completely dominant among respondents from local *gymnazia* and basic schools. The picture which seems to emerge is one in which very few of the teaching posts in these schools are held by younger teachers.

Overall percentages for the two regions:

18-25 yrs.	8%
26-30 yrs.	13%
31-40 yrs.	29%
41-50 yrs.	45%
50 + yrs.	5%

Q4. Respondent qualifications

Region & type of school	*ESk. Basic*	*ESk. Gym*	*ESk Other*	*CSk Basic*	*CSk Gym*	*CSk Other*	*WSk Basic*	*WS Gym*	*WSk Other*
Accreditation	n/a.	n/a.	n/a.	12	5	4	9	6	7
Requalifiers	n/a.	n/a.	n/a.	8	6	4	1	3	3
T.Diploma	n/a.	n/a.	n/a.	14	20	8	5	9	5
None	n/a.	n/a.	n/a.	3	0	2	3	0	0
Total:	*41*	*18*	*46*	*37*	*31*	*18*	*18*	*18*	*15*

No details available for E.Slovakia. Overall figures are for C & W.Slovakia

In the questionnaire sent to teachers in Central and Western Slovakia respondents were asked to place themselves into one of four categories to describe their level of qualifications. The accreditation examination, given by each regional *Metodicke Centrum* is really a language qualification given to teachers of other subjects who are required by their schools to teach English. The one-day test makes a difference to salary scales paid to state school teachers of English. It does not contain any element of ELT methodology. Respondents with teaching diplomas had either already completed (or were in the process of completing) a degree course with an English-teaching component at a Slovak university. Those classifying themselves as requalifiers would have initially qualified in another subject, but returned to university (usually for one day a week) for a 3-year in-service course specializing in ELT. Those stating they had no qualifications would normally have studied English at secondary school without passing any specialized examinations in the subject beyond that level.

The figures in both regions show that basic school teachers are more likely to have only the accreditation examination (perhaps in combination with teaching experience in other subjects). This situation does not seem surprising given the increasing tendency of Slovak basic schools to offer English classes to younger children (usually as a result of parental pressure): it seems that the growth in demand often has to be met by encouraging English-speaking teachers with no qualifications in the subject to fill the gap.

Overall percentages for the two regions:	Accreditation	31%
	Requalification	18%
	Teaching Diploma	45%
	No qualifications	6%

Q5. Respondent ELT experience

Region & type of school	*ESk. Basic*	*ESk. Gym*	*ESk Other*	*CSk Basic*	*CSk Gym*	*CSk Other*	*WSk Basic*	*WS Gym*	*WSk Other*
0-1	n/a.	n/a.	n/a.	3	1	0	4	3	2
2-3	n/a.	n/a.	n/a.	6	3	4	6	3	4
4-6	n/a.	n/a.	n/a.	5	10	7	4	6	4
7-10	n/a.	n/a.	n/a.	13	2	2	3	2	5
11-20	n/a.	n/a.	n/a.	8	9	3	1	2	0
20+	n/a.	n/a.	n/a.	2	6	2	0	2	0
Total:	*41*	*18*	*46*	*37*	*31*	*18*	*18*	*18*	*15*

No details available for E.Slovakia. Overall figures are for C & W.Slovakia

These figures seem to show more inexperienced teachers (and possibly recent graduates) responding in Western.Slovakia than in Central Slovakia. However, in both regions there is wide variation from teacher to teacher in terms of teaching experience with no group clearly dominating. As might be expected, the more prestigious and more academic *gymnazia* appear to have a greater proportion of highly-experienced teachers of English, but not excessively so, especially in Western Slovakia. If the overall figures for qualifications and experience are compared, the respondent population seems to suggest a mix of teachers, some of whom have recently qualified but have little experience, while many others have been teaching for many years and, presumably, gained their qualifications some years ago.

Overall percentages for the two regions:

0-1 yrs.	9%
2-3 yrs.	19%
4-6 yrs.	26%
7-10 yrs.	20%
11-20 yrs.	17%
20+ yrs.	9%

Q6. ELT materials used as main coursebook (one or more choices possible)

Region & type of school	*ESk. Basic*	*ESk. Gym*	*ESk Other*	*CSk Basic*	*CSk Gym*	*CSk Other*	*WSk Basic*	*WS Gym*	*WSk Other*
Discoveries	17	-	-	18	-	-	9	-	-
Proj. English	6	-	1	17	-	-	8	-	-
Anglictina	20	-	-	5	-	-	1	-	-
A./samoukov	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Strategies	-	6	12	-	2	2	-	-	-
Blueprint	-	2	11	-	4	8	-	2	3
Grapevine	-	2	3	-	-	4	-	1	2
Headway	-	4	4	-	13	1	-	8	4
Hotline	-	1	4	-	4	-	-	6	1
NCEC	-	2	2	-	1	-	-	-	-
CEC	-	-	2	-	5	-	-	-	1
N.Generation	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	1
Start.English	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Anglicky jaz.	-	-	4	-	-	2	-	1	5
Exchanges	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
A/am. Realie	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Flying Colors	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
E.c/versation	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Streetwise	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
Criss Cross	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Total:	*43*	*18*	*47*	*40*	*31*	*18*	*19*	*21*	*17*

When examining the figures on coursebook use it should always be remembered that the survey results for the three regions each correspond to a different year, with Prcikova's 1996 data from the East preceding the 1997 results for the Centre and 1998 results for the West.

The figures for *Basic Schools* show that three coursebooks, two of which are imported, are used almost exclusively as the main teaching materials for young learners. At the same time, the patterns of use seem to have changed from 1996 to 1998, with the locally-produced *"Anglictina"*, the most popular choice of teachers in East Slovakia in 1996, becoming less and less common in the other regions of the

country in 1997 and 1998. For all three years and all three regions, imported English language coursebooks outnumber the Slovak-produced variety, but it seems that their dominance is constantly increasing, if these figures are taken as indicating a trend. The two widely-used imported titles do not come from the same publisher, but from one of two dominant ELT publishers in Slovakia, Oxford University Press and Longman (compare use of their titles at secondary school level). While the tendency is for *"Project English"* to become more widely-used due to its recommendation by the Ministry of Education (see Ch.1 pp.28-29), *"Discoveries"* still remains popular.

Overall Basic School coursebook use:	Discoveries	43%
	Project English	30%
	Anglictina	25%
	A.j. pre samoukov	1%
Eastern Slovakia coursebook use:	Discoveries	40%
	Project English	14%
	Anglictina	46%
Central Slovakia coursebook use:	Discoveries	45%
	Project English	42.5%
	Anglictina	12.5%
Western Slovakia coursebook use:	Discoveries	47%
	Project English	42%
	Anglictina	5%
	A.j. pre samoukov	5%

In the 4-year and 8-year *gymnazia,* patterns of coursebook use are less clear. The main titles in use are the *"Strategies"* and *"Blueprint"* series, published by Longman, together with the *"Headway"*, *"Hotline"* and *"Grapevine"* series, published by Oxford University Press. Titles from other British publishers make very rare appearances, (the only significant exception being *"New Cambridge English Course/ Cambridge English Course"* from Cambridge University Press), while locally-produced textbooks are almost non-existent (although there is one mention of *"Criss Cross"*, a new regionally-produced title). Among the imported titles, OUP's *"Headway"* has become dominant within the 1996-1998 period. The percentages are as follows:-

Overall gymnazia coursebook use:	Strategies	11%
	Blueprint	11%
	Grapevine	4 %
	Headway	36%
	Hotline	16%
	NCEC/CEC	11%
	Others	10%
Eastern Slovakia coursebook use:	Strategies	33%
	Blueprint	11%
	Grapevine	11%
	Headway	22%
	Hotline	5.5%
	NCEC/CEC	11%
	Others	5.5%
Central Slovakia coursebook use:	Strategies	6 %
	Blueprint	13%
	Headway	42%
	Hotline	13%
	NCEC/CEC	19%
	Others	6%
Western Slovakia coursebook use:	Blueprint	10%
	Grapevine	5%
	Headway	38%
	Hotline	29%
	Others	20%

When attempting to identify trends from this data it should always be borne in mind that since total numbers are small, percentage figures are easily influenced. An example would be the 19% of teachers using the *"Cambridge English Course"* or *"New Cambridge English Course"* in Central Slovakia. This figure only came about because of a 100% response from the teachers in one particular school in one of the region's medium-sized towns, who all happened to be using these titles, whereas in other schools in the same region the same titles are scarcely mentioned.

Nevertheless, it is arguable that there are some possible trends emerging from this data. From the figures quoted above, it seems that the use of certain titles, such as the *"Strategies"* series is in decline. In 1996, *"Strategies"* books were used by a third of

East Slovak respondents as their first-choice main coursebooks; in 1998 in Western Slovakia there were no mentions of these titles at all. At the same time, the use of OUP's *"Hotline"* seems to be growing all the time and will soon, perhaps, be ready to offer a challenge to the dominance of *"Headway"* (also published by OUP). It is possible to foresee a situation where this one British publisher supplies the majority of titles used by Slovak teachers of English at state gymnazia.

Apart from gymnazia there are several other types of secondary schools represented in the survey. *Obchodna akademia* (business schools) and *hotelovy akademia* (hotel & catering schools) incorporate general English courses within their teaching programmes, as well as some ESP. When (in a few cases) respondents mentioned ESP coursebook titles as well as general English titles in their replies to the survey, only the general English titles have been included.

Other *SPS* (technical schools), and *SOU (* apprentice schools) which prepare students for careers such as nursing, also offer English classes, although usually for fewer hours per week than the business and hotel & catering schools. Students tend to be less motivated at *SPS* and *SOU* schools than elsewhere, since English is not seen as a vital component of their future careers, as well as the fact that they are generally less academically-oriented. For all of these reasons, English teachers in these schools tend to choose coursebook materials which they perceive as being easy for students to use and easy to teach from. In this respect Longman's *"Blueprint"* seems to be the preferred title among many teachers. Also, whereas *gymnazia* almost always choose imported materials for their students, it can be seen that a reasonable number of teachers in these schools prefer the locally-produced *"Anglicky jazyk"* series, which now has an old-fashioned look, having been produced pre-1989, but has the advantage of a very clear and uncomplicated format. The percentages for coursebook use are as follows:-

Overall coursebook use: (for secondary schools except 4-year & 8-year gymnazia)	Strategies	18%
	Blueprint	27%
	Grapevine	11%
	Headway	11%
	Hotline	6 %
	A.jazyk	12%
	Others	15%
Eastern Slovakia coursebook use:	Strategies	26%
	Blueprint	23%
	Grapevine	6 %
	Headway	8.5%
	Hotline	8.5%
	A.jazyk	8.5%
	Others	19%
Central Slovakia coursebook use:	Strategies	11%
	Blueprint	44%
	Grapevine	22%
	Headway	5.5%
	A.jazyk	11%
	Others	5.5%
Western Slovakia coursebook use:	Blueprint	18%
	Grapevine	12%
	Headway	23%
	Hotline	6%
	A.Jazyk	30%
	Others	12%

Conclusions

The very general information concerning coursebook selection for all the different types of Slovak schools acts as useful background material, which can put into a broader perspective the views of individual ELT specialists as they appear in interviews, and the views of individual teachers as they appear in focus groups and pre-lesson and post-lesson discussions. In the following chapters the case study report turns to providing details of the more qualitative data collected through such means. Before turning to the qualitative data, however, there are a few points apparently

emerging from the kind of data collected from the survey questionnaire that need to be emphasized.

Firstly, it appears from the data that the range of main course materials available to basic school teachers is extremely limited and seemingly becoming more so with each year that passes. The influence of the Ministry of Education, which recommends set titles to basic schools, is clearly being felt here. But whereas in the past the Ministry was prepared to suggest Slovak titles such as the *"Anglictina"* series as well as books such as *"Discoveries"*, it now prefers to promote one title - most recently *"Project English"*. Although teachers are not forced to use the recommended title, there is a long tradition of respecting the official choice made by a committee of 'experts'. In addition, the recommended title is often heavily subsidized, so that choosing an alternative will mean asking students and their parents to pay more money. At secondary levels it seems at first sight that a wide range of titles are being chosen by Slovak teachers, but once again, with the help of committee 'experts' and ambitious publishers, it seems that the choice is being limited more and more to a few imported titles.

A second conclusion that may be drawn from the data is that the dominance of coursebook titles from one or two powerful publishing houses is a worrying issue. All the available statistics seem to support this cause for concern: for example, in Western Slovakia 4 out of 6 titles used in *gymnazia* (mentioned by 17 out of 21 respondents) are Oxford University Press publications. The same publisher only managed 3 titles out of 7 (with 9 mentions out of 18) in Prcikova's 1996 survey in the East. Comparisons of other types of schools also reveal the growing dominance of this publisher, which is able to market its different titles to different types of schools (see also interview with Ingrid Freebairn in Chapter 5). A situation in which one foreign publisher is able to dominate the market for EFL textbooks in state schools is undesirable and likely to cause problems for local teachers faced with a lack of choice of materials suitable for their students' needs.

Finally, in the face of aggressive marketing of imported textbooks, it seems that local materials are tending to be more and more marginalized, with teachers facing a real dilemma in this respect. The older secondary level Slovak titles such as Repka's *"Anglicky jazyk"* remain well-suited for preparing for school-leaving exams and university entrance tests, but are no longer popular since they not only look old-fashioned, but also contain elements of pro-communist political ideology built into their texts (all were published before 1989). Meanwhile, at basic school levels Tandlichova's *"Anglictina"*, is also perceived as being out-of-date (see comments p.159), even though its author is still held in great esteem as the principal EFL specialist in the country's most prestigious university. At the same time no newer Slovak titles are appearing to take the place of these widely-used coursebooks. It seems that a point has been reached where it is acknowledged that Slovak state schools and their teachers will need to be dependent on foreign publishers for their English language teaching materials. Within the survey only a single mention of a new regional coursebook initiative, *"Criss Cross"*, gives reason to suppose that this trend might still be reversed in the future.

CHAPTER 5: THE CASE STUDY REPORT - INTERVIEWS

5.1. Introduction

In 1997 and 1998 a series of interviews were conducted with experienced practitioners (see Chapter 3.5.), loosely based on the model provided and piloted by Strakova (1996). The main aim was in some ways similar to that of the survey questionnaire - to provide background information which would help to clarify issues related to educational change raised by teachers in focus group interviews and discussions arising from lesson observations. However, whereas the questionnaire was intended to produce background data of a purely descriptive nature, these interviews aimed to produce data which would help to explain the reasons for changes which have taken place in ELT in the region, the effects of such changes for teachers, the importance of educational and linguistic traditions and the impact of ELT projects. It should be noted that this type of explanatory data is also present to a certain extent in written documents such as project plans or syllabus and test specifications issued by organizations such as the British Council, the Slovak Ministry of Education or *Metodicke Centra.* In a few cases where the data from such documents supplements or clarifies that contained in interviews, the two types of data have been reported together (see, for example the report of the interview with N.Butler in this chapter).

Five interviewees were chosen to provide different informative perspectives on the phenomenon of educational change within the region; points of view represented include that of the applied linguist/language teaching consultant, the educational project planner, the textbook writer, and the teacher trainer. In Chapter 8 the data from these interviews will be compared with the data from focus groups, lesson observations and documents. In the following sections the aim is to present a summarized version with commentary of what was said by each interviewee, highlighting key arguments relevant to the main themes of this research project. The complete transcripts of all the interviews can be found in Appendices E-I. The interviews have been presented according to their

chronological order (see also Chapter 3.9), which was as follows:-

01.07.97: Professor H.Widdowson, University of London Institute of Education.
13.11.97: Dr.Kamil Dovciak, Matej Bel University, Banska Bystrica, Slovakia.
18.11.97: Professor E.Tandlichova, Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovakia.
03.04.98: Ms. Ingrid Freebairn, freelance ELT author.
15.05.98: Mr. Nicholas Butler, the British Council, London.

5.2. Interview with Professor H.Widdowson.

The interview with the applied linguist and author, Professor H.Widdowson was requested to provide important background information in two different areas, the first being the assumptions underlying the setting up of ELT projects in the East and Central European region after 1989 by the British Council and other organizations; the second area being educational traditions in the region. (NB: The final few minutes of the interview were not recorded: this is the reason for the sudden cutoff point in the Appendix E transcript.)

Professor Widdowson described how after 1989, projects were set up in various Central and Eastern European countries involving the British Council as the official government institution concerned with English language teaching. He described his own involvement as a visiting consultant invited by the British Council to various countries in the region (concentrating in this interview on the former Czechoslovakia in particular) as well as his misgivings about the directions which the projects seemed to be taking .

Q: What are your thoughts on the track record of English language teaching projects in East and Central Europe since 1989?

I thought it was (important) ..... that existing traditions of scholarship and education needed to be respected, known about and respected. And that in the past in my judgement there had been rather too much of people coming in from outside "bringing in the good

news". So that essentially this whole business of development was a reciprocal process and the ultimate arbiters were people who were receiving rather than those who were giving. (p.271-2)

For them this was an opportunity to think about what they were doing, to establish new procedures, new ideas, take a new look at what they were doing, and get much-needed finance to do this. So they were unlikely to raise any dissident voices, but dissident voices, it seemed to me, were necessary. (p.272)

A conniving ethos .....was likely, it seemed to me, to lead to ultimate failure. Because what would happen was that people would then accept those ideas and procedures, even those which ultimately they did not believe in, because they were so willing to cooperate. And my point was that one of the functions of the external influence was to create a climate of critical appraisal. (p.272)

It's not enough to have imported expertise, you've got to have expertise which is tempered by local knowledge. That's what expertise means if you're in the development business. So I said that it seemed to me that anyone coming to Czechoslovakia needs to know the tradition of scholarship and education of this country. After all this is a country that is well-known for its linguistic scholarship. (p.273)

Widdowson clearly considers that the British specialists in the countries which he visited seemed not to have been sufficiently well briefed on local traditions of scholarship. For example, he states that an important requirement for any visiting specialist coming to the Czech Republic or Slovakia would be an awareness of the key influence of the ideas of the Prague School of linguistics on language teaching in the region. And while "bringing in the good news" does not necessarily imply importing totally unsuitable teaching approaches or methods, the point being made is that the kind of English teaching methodology acquired on RSA courses, or through teaching foreign students in the UK cannot claim any real authority when removed from its usual context. But if the kind of "conniving ethos" which Widdowson describes is allowed to establish itself, this will undoubtedly ensure in practice that imported teaching materials, methods and approaches are promoted without being subject to any real critical appraisal. And critical appraisal, he feels, is the key to ensuring that ELT projects will achieve some measure of long-term success. His assertion that the influence of organizations such as the British Council

should be used to create the kind of climate where critical appraisal should flourish echoes the call of writers such as Phillipson (1992: 319) for a "critical ELT" . The problem, however, here is one of a conflict of interests: to encourage teachers to be more critical of and less prepared to accept unconditionally all the proposals which emerge from ELT projects involving educational change is seemingly to work against the interests of other parties involved such as British publishers, with whom the British Council has strong informal links.

Q: How would you characterize the educational traditions of the region and Britain? How would they compare and contrast with each other?

The impression would be that (in the region) ..... there is much more respect for established scholarship than there is in this country. What I think the West has questioned over the last two decades is the whole notion of authority, and the emphasis on individual rights, and choice and freedom of choice, and freedom generally to do what you as an individual wish to do. And the repercussions on education of course in the shift to learner-centredness and the assumption that there is no reliable accepted way to conform to ..... that people conform to their own ideas and are free to have various notions about almost anything. So this has undermined the whole notion that there is a tradition which you trust in ..... a tradition of scholarship and belief. (p.278)

What we've been doing for the past 30 years is questioning the authority of scholarship and belief. What I think in Central Europe has happened is that there hasn't been the same questioning. ..... Clearly there has been dissension, but I think it's been within a framework of respect for authority, for authoritative knowledge. What they've been against is authoritarian belief, but not authoritative belief. (p.278)

I have a strong feeling that the traditions will last much longer than we think. Which is again why, it seems to me, it is only prudent .... not to undermine, or to appear to threaten, or to undervalue these scholarly structures in these countries, but to work with them. (p.278-9)

The fact that respect for established scholarship appears to have survived the collapse of the pre-1989 social order in countries such as the former Czechoslovakia might initially seem odd to the Western observer. But, according to Widdowson, it is entirely wrong to assume that , because people were only too willing for social and political change, they would also want to sweep away all of the established traditions

of education and scholarship. Since such traditions have survived the entire period of communism (see Chapter 1, p.18-19), it can be argued that nothing could be further from the truth, and that people are more ready than ever to value well-established ideas, the product of longstanding schools of thought (see also comments p.171-3).

The distinction made between *authoritarian belief* on the one hand and *authoritative belief* on the other is a useful one. People who lived under communist regimes with their emphasis on the politicization of education understand what it means to have the former imposed on them: an example of this would be the compulsory study of Marxism-Leninism without which no university student would be allowed to complete a degree course before 1989, whatever his/her specialist subject. But Widdowson is right to assert that this would in no way cause confusion in people's minds, causing them to reject the authority of an educational establishment which has mostly survived the events of 1989 intact . However, such confusion does seemingly exist in the mind of the specialist outsider who makes an assessment that, since people are clearly ready and willing to change, that they are therefore prepared to reject an accumulation of learning and scholarship that preceded communism.

Discussion then turned to the possible negative impact of the presence of imported ELT projects and specialists in the region and, specifically, to the harm that can be done by insensitive initiatives that fail to take account of established traditions, such as the 'fast-track' teacher training scheme for English teachers.

I think that there's a good deal of what is quite legitimately authoritative about the traditions in university and elsewhere in these countries. But of course, any recognition of authority smacked of the previous regime. That was I think the difficulty. So everything conspired to undermine everything that had happened, everything. And I think some of the awful consequences of this are made clear. I mean you graft essentially an ethos of greed onto people who have been deprived and you get this awful spectacle ... this sort of short-term grasping for some immediate gratification, whether it's education or something else. (p.280)

We did exactly the same .... in a way it's the same phenomena as you find when we set up .... by 'we' I mean the British Council, ODA and so on .... set up projects in Saudi Arabia or in India, where again there was insensitivity to local conditions and traditions. Then you could say, well we ought to respect the traditions of Hinduism or

Islam or whatever. These are respectable things to respect. But when you get into East Europe in 1989, where everyone is trying to enlist on our side of things, where there was a general assumption that this was a rotten regime, totally failed and totally discredited, and the people of course themselves were only too willing for a change .... of course you swept away everything, because you condemned everything under the name of totalitarianism, suppression and so on. (p.280)

Although you may say .... that this is absurd pedantic scholarship ... four dreary years when an English teacher only needs three, or even two, or perhaps one ..... they just need to be trained in certain basic techniques. Whatever the justification for such a policy ..... even if there were grounds for putting this to the case, you could prepare good English teachers in a year .... it's highly insensitive to propose that in defiance of the established pattern of university education. (p.279)

Widdowson's pessimism does not automatically mean that ELT projects in the region are doomed to failure, but that the chances of failure are increased by the inability of organizations such as the British Council and USIS to learn from past experiences in other countries. Of course the dividing line between success and failure is always relative when a project comes to be evaluated, but it is evident that, in Widdowson's terms, undermining long-established traditions of scholarship would have negative consequences for those who such projects are supposed to benefit, in other words teachers and local institutions. He clearly feels strongly (and with much justification) that such a course of action is morally reprehensible, as well as counterproductive.

Widdowson also stresses that one possible negative consequence of sweeping everything away could be to promote "an ethos of greed" . In a situation where people might feel that they have suffered material or spiritual deprivation for many years , it is not difficult to appeal to the desire for some form of immediate gratification, whether this is in education or in something else. Widdowson seems to imply that there have been people ready and willing to exploit these tendencies, casting teachers in the role of consumers and grasping the economic opportunities of the situation. Clearly British publishers might easily be tempted to play this role with the prospect of completely new markets opening out in front of them, especially if their potential consumers are ready and willing to believe in the superiority of their products.

Throughout the interview Widdowson's argument is that educational change cannot be a one-way process with ELT projects merely being concerned with handing over new ideas, resources and technologies from those who have them to those who do not. Whatever the motives for introducing change, he believes that attention must be paid and due respect given to traditions of learning and scholarship. A good illustration of the dangers of failing to do this is referred to in the quotation above concerning the implementation of 'fast-track' university teacher training programmes in the region. Their aim seems simple and practical, to produce more trained teachers in a shorter space of time to address the shortage of teachers of English in the region and to satisfy the increasing demand for English. However, Widdowson believes that to impose an unfamiliar pattern of training and education "in defiance of the established pattern of university education" is completely unjustified. The fact that all of the countries participating in the 'fast-track' scheme have now decided to discontinue it for unspecified reasons (see interview with N.Butler, p.149) would seem to fully vindicate his position.

5.3. Interview with Dr.Kamil Dovciak

Dr.Kamil Dovciak, an applied linguist and translation specialist, is the Head of the Department of English and American Studies in the Pedagogical Faculty of Matej Bel University, responsible for co-ordinating a series of pre-service degree courses for future teachers of English in the Central Slovak region. The interview focussed on changes in pre-service and in-service teacher education since 1989 , educational traditions which are now being challenged and the relevance of UK-funded ELT projects to Slovak needs. Dr.Dovciak described a difficult situation for teachers of English before 1989 with a lack of resources, little specific training for teaching English, and very few opportunities for teachers and learners to use the language.

Q: How has English language teaching in Slovakia changed since 1989?

The situation has changed very much .... because before 1989, the contexts were so limited that this influenced also the methodology. We were studying foreign languages, learning foreign languages, in a way they used sometimes to learn Greek

or Latin, like dead languages. Because you had a book .... usually you started from the text. Well, there were recordings of course, but the level of them was relative. And the teachers who were teaching English at secondary schools ... they themselves had not been trained. (p.282)

Teachers themselves had problems with the spoken media. They were not able to understand the flow of conversation. ... And of course the opportunities to use the language, the foreign language, the language studied ... were so limited that more or less I think that there was no need for any communicative approach, because usually what you did with your language was that you used it as a tool to get information or knowledge from written media .... from books, newspapers and so on. (p.282)

From these quotations a picture emerges in which pre-1989 students of English learned the language as a body of knowledge in much the same way as they might have learnt historical facts. Since teachers' contact with English was mainly through the written medium, it was hardly surprising that they concentrated on teaching their pupils from written texts. The very limited opportunities for teachers to travel to English-speaking countries, the equally limited opportunities to meet native speaker visitors to their own country, combined with lack of resources would undoubtedly have affected the ability and motivation of teachers to develop their own listening and speaking skills in English, and therefore those of their pupils as well.

And yet, the situation was perhaps not quite as extreme as it may seem from Dovciak's comments. For example the claim that teachers of English received little training before 1989 is surprising. In some ways pre-service (possibly) and in-service training (certainly) were approached more systematically. For example, teachers working in the specialized language schools in the pre-1989 years seem to have had good training and support (see interview with E.Tandlichova, p.293-4).

Q. Would you say that you have a different educational tradition in Slovakia from the ones we have in the West, or are they very similar? What about linguistic traditions?

I think they are a little bit different, because, you know , under the old regime, former regime, everything was conserved. And there was the so-called philological approach. You studied language to learn to know the culture. This was the aim, which was very high, because the original aims were for you to learn (let's say) English to read Shakespeare. Or you know the highlights of culture of the language. (p.283)

I know that many of the protagonists of the Prague School of linguistics were interested in language teaching, and they may have had their opinions influenced by their theoretical concepts ..... I think that two main ideas of Prague School of linguistics are structuralism and functionalism. We have had our share of the structuralist approach to language teaching ... all those drill exercises, repeating grammatical sentences according to a grammatical model .... and repeating 10, 15 sentences with exactly the same grammatical pattern. (p.283-4)

And maybe more it was influenced by the other idea of functionalism, that language has certain functions and you need certain language means to achieve those functions..... The well-known example is that if you describe a bicycle pump, no matter in what detail you describe it, (but) if you do not know anything about bicycles and what is the thing used for, you do not have the idea in fact of what is it. So perhaps, this may happen .....and influence the way languages are taught. (p.284)

Dovciak's comments concerning the "philological approach" to teaching languages are a reminder that English is just one foreign language with a long tradition of being taught in Slovak schools. Indeed traditions of English teaching may owe a great deal to the teaching of other languages such as German and Russian. It is quite possible that pre-1989 teachers may have equated the teaching of language with the teaching of 'high culture' because this been the approach used in the teaching of other languages, or even because of the influence of the teaching of Slovak in State schools. A problem inherent in ELT projects which seek to promote change in the teaching of English is that they often fail to even taken into consideration the methodology of other languages which are commonly taught. Local teacher training colleges and university departments who are preparing individuals to teach a variety of foreign languages (and not just English) would be unlikely to make the same mistake.

Similarly, it is impossible to regard linguistic traditions as applying only to the teaching of English. The protagonists of the Prague School of linguistics were indeed interested in foreign language teaching, but often with respect to the way in which languages such as English related to Czech and Slovak (see Widdowson's comments on contrastive analysis, p.276). Dovciak clearly feels that the Prague School has imparted a structuralist and a functionalist perspective to the teaching of languages in Slovakia, but one which can be applied to the teaching of all languages in Slovak schools, not just English.

Q: What are your impressions of UK-funded ELT projects in this region?

I think that ..... British Council projects are more or less concentrated on methodology teaching, methodology in not only pre-service, but also in-service teaching . Whereas you know the problems here are not so much with methodology ..... well we have heaps of books ....thanks to the British Council and donations from abroad about methodology. So what we really need is native speakers as persons who are irreplaceable. ....Because you know, a Slovak English teacher can study hard and learn, and .... can specialize in methodology, literature, whatever. But one thing which he can never be is a native speaker. (p.285-6)

I think we need native speakers primarily for what we call practical language teaching. Everybody says that it's very important to teach the communicative approach for practical language, but nobody of the foreign experts wants to teach that. (p.287)

If I were offered a specialist in English literature with an international reputation and a person who would teach practical language, I think I would opt for the practical language person . .... Maybe this is not right, I don't know. But Slovak teachers .... of course they can teach practical language lessons you know, but we are always mock native speakers. We do not have the feel for nuances and shades of meanings and collocations and things like that. (p.288)

Dovciak's views are very clear and echo those of other Slovak academics involved in teacher training. The need for specialists in 'content' subjects such as literature, language teaching methodology and linguistics is questioned, with the argument being that foreign organizations such as the British Council are already helping sufficiently in these areas by providing books and other resources. Meanwhile the priorities of British Council ELT projects dictate that they should be focussed primarily on ELT methodology, both pre-service and in-service, and on counterpart training. A consultancy report on the progress being made by the pre-service project involving a native speaker lecturer in Dovciak's own department concluded that:

The general impression I had was that the considerable energy and expertise of the 3 British Council lecturers was not properly utilized by their host institutions and that their effectiveness as change agents is much reduced by the immediate demands on them to prop up significant areas of teaching in their departments... My view is that goodwill is the only possible reason for maintaining these posts in their present form. In the current academic year, considerable progress needs to be made in the following areas: identification and training of counterparts; setting up materials

banks and other sustainable resources; establishment of firm links on which to build school experience; forging links with other ELT projects (Bolitho 1995:4).

The contrast between these words and Dovciak's perceptions of the needs of his department and the most useful role for native speaker 'experts' could not be greater. In the consultancy report there is no mention of establishing links with the teaching of other languages, but rather with other ELT projects. The consultant's view is that the native speaker specialist should identify and train a Slovak colleague to teach the methodology of ELT, the implication being that the transfer of expertise is very much one-way and very much confined to one subject area. Dovciak's view, on the other hand, is that Slovak academics already have the expertise to prepare trainees to teach a foreign language in a Slovak State school.

Emerging from these very different perspectives concerning the role of the native speaker specialist is a sense of frustration on both sides. In Dovciak's case the frustration lies in his assertion that Slovak teachers "'are always mock native speakers". The authority of the native speaker specialist, for him, lies in his/her abilities as a proficient user of the language rather than in his/her teaching skills, skills as a linguist (in the general sense) or knowledge of English literature.

5.4. Interview with Professor E. Tandlichova

Eva Tandlichova is Professor of English Language Teaching in the Philosophical Faculty of Comenius University, Bratislava. She is also a well-known author, having written the widely- used "Anglictina " series of coursebooks for Slovak basic schools. The interview concentrated on the changes in ELT in Slovakia after 1989, the problems of meeting the growing demand for English teaching in the country, problems posed by imported coursebook materials and the role of the learner's mother tongue in teaching English.

Q: How would you describe the state of ELT in Slovakia before 1989?

It's really a long tradition English language teaching in former Czechoslovakia before 1989. English was part of the curriculum in schools since the beginning of the century ..... mostly 20s and during the War as well. The teachers of English in the then Czechoslovakia were also the scholars, mostly linguists ..... and very many of them were members of the Prague school. And they also were writing the materials which were used then. (p.289)

Since 1962 they established so called elite schools ..... where English was taught from the 3rd year of the primary attendance. It means that 8 year olds started with English. (p.290)

In the 60s when I was studying at the secondary school ..... they used textbooks which were ..... based mostly on grammar-translation methods. But there were also teachers then who were not satisfied with that approach. (p.291)

Then when I started teaching we had other textbooks. ..... It was a collection again published by a team in Prague. And they ..... started the tradition of textbooks based on communication, because there were also some pictures, visualized grammar and structures. And even though there were grammar-translation exercises, they were also exercises which provoked students to use the dialogues. (p.293)

(The syllabus) was compulsory. They were writing the syllabus for all the subjects and the syllabuses should be approved by the Ministry of Education, and then the syllabus was compulsory for all the schools in Czechoslovakia. And when the syllabus was ready so the textbooks were written..... There were no other materials except the textbook. (p.295)

Tandlichova emphasizes the long tradition of English language teaching in the former Czechoslovakia before 1989, mentioning the important role played by the specialized elite language schools established in the 1960s where high standards of foreign language teaching were maintained. The situation she describes is one in which textbooks were written by linguistics scholars at the main universities in accordance with Ministry approved syllabi. Although she does not make it clear if the same academics were also involved in the original syllabus preparation, the significant point is that the textbooks were only written after the syllabi for all foreign languages had been decided, in contrast with the post-1989 situation in which the textbook is often the driving force. The pre-1989 syllabus would have been compulsory for all teachers and visits by inspectors would have ensured that they adhered to the

programme at a uniform pace. There would normally have been no other materials apart from the textbook.

From Tandlichova's comments it is evident that the grammar-translation method dominated, but that there were also teachers not entirely satisfied with this approach who supplemented the materials in creative ways. They would most probably have concentrated on making up areas of obvious deficiency such as listening comprehension, but also have introduced activities into their classes which could be deemed to be 'communicative' (see also focus group comments, Chapter 6.5. p.176-7).

Q: What significant changes have taken place in ELT since 1989?

What I appreciated was that a foreign language was included ..... introduced into primary schools as a compulsory subject, not as an option at part of an elite school (p.296)

The new books which entered the market and our schools, especially textbooks published in Britain .... their layout, their structure, their methodology was completely different to what our teachers experienced. (p.298)

They bring the new approach to teaching, to teaching a foreign language. What is good about them is that they are full of visual material which can be used .... and they bring a lot of activities and exercises. (p.298)

There's only one language there ..... and the mother tongue is missing. (p.299)

Tandlichova feels that the biggest difference in comparing ELT pre-1989 and post-1989 is in the amount of English being taught. High quality English teaching is no longer seen as the special preserve of elite language schools (although these still operate in Slovakia) nor is learning English considered as a minor option along with subjects such as needlework and cooking. It is now compulsory in Slovak basic schools and the tendency is for it to be taught to increasingly younger age groups.

Her feelings concerning imported coursebook materials appear to be mixed. She can see obvious attractions in the new imported coursebook packages currently being

used by the majority of teachers (see Chapter 4), but rightly points out that older materials such as her own highly successful "Anglictina" series had other advantages, the main one being the use of the learner's mother tongue as a resource. On this topic she adds:

I think that even though we delete the mother tongue from teaching, it's still there. Even the interlanguage in the learner's mind, thinking, it's there..... I'm against the grammar-translation method, because that's a kind of mechanical approach to teaching. But I think that the mother tongue can be used .... its role should be to somehow remind students of the qualities of both languages, and also of the way how people communicate when there is a gap between them. (p.302)

This recognition of the important role of the mother tongue is reinforced by the comments of teachers in focus groups (see Ch.6), who support the idea that beginner level learners in particular need explanations and lexical translations in Slovak. It follows that a beginner's course which ignores the role of the mother tongue (as is the case with the titles which have replaced "Anglictina") will be found to be deficient and will not be easy for Slovak teachers to use. The argument that a more important consideration is for textbooks to teach using communicative methodology is also questioned: in Tandlichova's opinion there is no incompatibility between communicative language teaching and use of the mother tongue.

Later in her interview (see p. 302) Tandlichova also points out that textbooks need to make allowances for the culture of the learner, as well as his/her native language, and that imported packages can sometimes fail this respect. Certain topics can be problematic for Slovak learners; there is a need for "general topics which are valid for any country" to ensure the learner's interest and understanding. A regional textbook might well be a solution in this respect, and she referred to one, a Czech initiative ("Criss Cross"), that was about to appear.

Q. What kinds of support can we give to teachers?

Foreign lecturers through the British Council, also USIS .... they have done quite a good job here and still do, because they encouraged ..... our teachers to somehow start studying or think about permanent studies, permanent development .....And

there are resources like textbooks in the Resource Centres or teachers' books or the resource books from methodology ... that are available there and they can read them. ..... And .... the more they read, the more they understand, and the more they can apply to their teaching. (p.305)

I think we have to approach teachers, somehow find the way how to get to them, even in those remote parts of the country..... speak to them, find out what they need and how ..... because it's really our job.... and I think that's the role of Metodicke Centra because it's in the region. .....Because those are the arms which are in various parts of Slovakia, and through them .....they should somehow be the key persons there to either organize or to initiate or do something there because they are there ..... they are living there ..... they see the situation. (p.306-7)

The other thing is that the small conferences which started, which somehow got the tradition in Slovakia .... especially within the past year, 1997 ..... So, it's also a way where you can bring more teachers in too. And the resolutions of those meetings or gatherings can be passed to the Ministry and to people who are responsible for this educational system. So, I think those are the ways, but I think we are still not courageous enough. (p.307)

Tandlichova feels strongly that much can be done to support teachers and to help with their professional development, but that sometimes the will to do this is lacking. In particular, it ought to be possible to put more pressure on the Ministry of Education for action in this respect (this is what she means by showing more courage) rather than to rely on foreign initiatives. The impression remains that although she is grateful to the British Council, USIS and other outside bodies for their support and for help with material resources, she feels that the main responsibility for local initiatives should be with the *Metodicke Centra* in each region. When she says that their teacher trainers are the key people in providing support for teachers in each area, she is making it clear that in her opinion the main support for Slovak teachers, especially those who are inexperienced and working in remote areas, should be provided by Slovaks.

At the end of the interview Professor Tandlichova discussed the relative merits of native speaker and non-native speaker teachers of English and had this to say:

I think that the usage of the mother tongue is there with the non-native teacher. Because the students know that you speak their language, so it helps the teacher, for example in teaching vocabulary, if you use the translation it speeds up the teaching

because it's not such a problem to say it in Slovak. (p.303)

Let's take the qualitative contribution of both of native and non-native teachers to the teaching of foreign languages, in our case English. .....You as a native speaker .... you can find all the nuances and antonyms and homonyms and everything to help you .... even the body language to help you to illustrate what you wanted to say, even to the beginners. (p.303)

I would say that when the native speaker of English would use Slovak in teaching, it would interfere with the feeling of the language .... because you are the bearer of... maybe the culture of the language, but also the flavour of it . .... There's another level, another layer where the .... native speakers can help, but it's a special field .... the translators' and interpreters' classes. ..... But in the ordinary class I think that the native speaker should be a native speaker teacher. (p.304)

Tandlichova seems to be saying that , in her view, roles of native speaker and non-native speaker teachers are somehow very clearly defined. The great advantage of the non-native speaker teacher is having at her disposal the resource of a mother tongue shared with the learner. And yet, in Slovakia, as in most countries there are also native speaker teachers who have become highly competent in the learner's mother tongue. It is interesting and somewhat surprising that Tandlichova believes that these individuals should *not* be encouraged to make use of this resource on the grounds that "it would interfere with the language". Clearly, she is more comfortable with the notion of both native and non-native speaker teachers remaining in what she perceives to be their rightful place.

Throughout her interview Tandlichova reveals her willingness to face the challenges of rapid educational change, as well as her readiness to do all that she can to help teachers of English adapt to changing professional circumstances. But from her perspective as someone who has been involved for many years in ELT in Slovakia both under the communist regime and in the post-communist years, she gives a strong impression that, in her opinion, Slovak solutions are required for Slovak problems, and that, while help from the West is welcome, Slovak teachers need to decide their own future.

5.5. Interview with Ingrid Freebairn

Ingrid Freebairn is the author or co-author of many successful EFL coursebooks, among them the "Strategies" series, "Discoveries", "Blueprint" and "Snapshot" (all published by Longman). All of these titles are currently being used somewhere within the Slovak education system by teachers in different types of schools (see Chapter 4). She has also visited most of the countries in the region and has conducted workshops for teachers in Slovakia. The interview aimed to present the perspective of not just an international author, but also, indirectly, that of an international publisher on the problems of educational change experienced by teachers in the region.

Q: How would you characterize the educational traditions of the East/Central European region?

What you met was a feeling that it was all very traditional. You look at the textbooks that were used there, and the methods were very much grammar-translation methods. And, yes ..... (it's) not very surprising ..... that the older textbooks, older methodology was very much teacher-led, from the top ..... and you'd expect the students to follow lockstep. And I've watched their old teachers, if you like, going round teaching .... and, yes, they will take a text and ask questions to each student at a time. There'll be no pairwork. ..... I think part of the problem with bringing in new material are actually physical problems. And it's the size of the classes, first and foremost, and the nature .....if you like, the physical arrangement of desks in classrooms. And however much you may advocate the use of caring and sharing methodology, it isn't easy for them. (p.317)

I know when the Polish teachers came .....on courses here ... and have attended with other teachers, who've perhaps been using more .... or have been taught by more modern methods .... and they felt their English was better. And they've been using the traditional methods and textbooks. And they felt that their command of English was actually superior to the younger ones ..... who'd been through more modern methodology. I think the answer to that is that you've got to know what you want to achieve with your pairwork really, for instance, rather than doing it ..... just go into it because it's there as a new methodology thing. (p.318)

From her visits to classes in Slovakia and in other countries of the region, Freebairn concludes that much of the teaching in state schools is still "traditional", "teacher led" and very much based on grammar-translation methodology. She singles out older teachers in particular for maintaining this kind of approach. Groupwork and pairwork, caring and sharing methodology and other types of evidence of a more 'student-

centred' approach to teaching may be impracticable, in her view, because of physical constraints in the classroom.

It is interesting that she draws attention to the success as learners of some Polish teachers taught by 'traditional' methods: at the same time it is not entirely clear what this example is supposed to illustrate. Is this one way of saying that 'traditional' methods may sometimes be more appropriate than the latest ideas? Alternatively, is the suggestion that more 'modern' methods can only be effective if teachers understand why they are using them, and that the colleagues of the Polish teachers had perhaps been unfortunate in this respect?

Simplistic discrimination between 'traditional' vs 'modern', 'teacher-centred' vs 'student-centred', or even 'older' vs 'younger' methods of teaching tends to lead to this kind of confusion of argument. Unfortunately, it is easy and convenient to allow oneself to be led in this direction. For example, it is not difficult to find examples of poorly-written locally-produced textbook materials which look and feel out-of-date and to contrast them with more recently produced full-colour coursebook packages imported from the UK. But it would be wrong to conclude from first appearances that the 'traditional' materials would be less effective in the teaching context for which they are intended. Freebairn seems to fall into this trap, dismissing the more 'traditional' materials used by mainly 'older' teachers, without really considering why her Polish teachers regarded themselves in such a successful light. In her defence, it is perhaps fair to point out that many older teachers would agree with her implication that the pre-1989 textbooks and the syllabus and methods which they brought with them too often provided a strait-jacket for both teachers and learners (see comments in focus groups Chapter 6.5. p.178).

Q. Why do you think books such as "Discoveries" are so popular? Are there any aspects in "Discoveries" or (say) in "Snapshot" that may be problematic for teachers within a very traditional context?

I think the funny thing about "Discoveries" was that it was a mixture of "Strategies" and "Streamline". And it went back to having either one lesson on a page or one on two pages, as opposed to where "Strategies" had five or six pages. So it was very much down to: "What can we do in a lesson which they like?" .... and it's much more transparent. but it also combined, I think, a very attractive artwork ..... So it looked nice, and it was also quite traditionally dialogue-based ..... most of it, not all of the lessons start with dialogue. ..... That was familiar ..... so you did get familiar things like dialogue and exercises in reading..... but there was also pairwork and games and open exercises, and all that felt new for them. (p.318)

I suppose there are all sorts of possible pitfalls. One thing that we hold dear to our hearts is that we actually try and include as up-to-date language as possible, and that it smacks of "now", and young people today. And this can be quite threatening to teachers, partly because they may not feel that they know about the subject matter ..... They may not sympathize with some of the topics, and so ..... you have to be very careful that you don't get onto sticky ground. You know exactly what the students want to talk about, but you can't always put that in the book. Because the teacher will say: "I can't possibly open that up in class". (p.319)

Given the sorts of students that we see with a very very short attention span, and, because their minds are very much occupied by their own world, at this age ..... you know, they're forced to go to English lessons. And they really need to be caught and attracted ..... their attention attracted immediately. And so with the attention span .. because it's not so long ... you have to have short and interesting activities that relate to them. I mean..... it's critical at this age that you don't lose them. And it can be threatening to some teachers, some of the topic subject matter. The language can be too, when it's expressions that they haven't heard before. (p.320)

Freebairn feels that books such as "Discoveries" have been successful because they are not too dissimilar from pre-1989 Czechoslovak textbooks: for example, the layout is clear and simple with one lesson on a page, or one on two pages (unlike her earlier "Strategies" which has five or six pages per unit). In addition, "Discoveries" is also "quite traditionally dialogue-based". But at the same time extra elements have been added which are not so familiar in Slovak textbooks: these would include pairwork and groupwork, games and extensive illustrations.

Her comments concerning the inclusion of very new and often unfamiliar language "that smacks of 'now' and young people today" reflect those of Slovak teachers (see focus group interviews Chapter 6.4. p.170). But the real problem arises not so much when these new items appear, but when there is a failure on the part of the textbook writers to signal them in the teachers' notes. Unfortunately, this is asking a great deal of any textbook writer, since it is very often incidental items which the native speaker writer may not even be aware of that cause most difficulty (see focus group comments, p.170-1). This problem concerns not just new words and expressions (or new meanings for old words) but also notions of what is grammatically acceptable or unacceptable.

Freebairn's views on topic selection appear to be that there are certain themes which will interest young people across cultures and nationalities, and will hold their attention. A second assumption is that teachers will often be uncomfortable with some of the topics that relate closely to young people, perhaps because of the age gap between teacher and pupils. A third assumption is that young people everywhere have a short attention span. It is on the basis of these assumptions that topics and activities are chosen for coursebooks such as "Snapshot".

The task of a textbook writer selecting topics for a diverse audience who she will never meet cannot be underestimated. However, it does seem dangerous to stereotype learners to the extent of providing topics that will take account of 'short attention spans'. The presumed benefit for the teacher from this is made clear in, for example, the publisher's promotional material for "Snapshot" in Slovakia:

Teaching is great when we feel that our students
1. are learning
2. are enjoying what they are learning
3. are taking responsibility for their learning
Here is the book that will help you to get those feelings more often: Snapshot. Snapshot gets results with your teenage learners by focussing on what matters to them.

(advertisement in Longman ELT Slovakia Newsletter March 1998)

Teachers are as interested as textbook writers in motivating learners and in finding out what really interests and matters to them. In Slovakia many secondary school teachers make use of the locally-produced *"Friendship"* magazine (published by FLP, Bratislava) in their classrooms because it provides them with useful source material for reading and discussion. But the appeal of a full-colour attractively laid-out coursebook such as "Snapshot" can turn to frustration when topics designed to appeal to young people miss their mark, as they often will. For instance, pupils as well as their teachers may feel uncomfortable exploring certain topics in the public forum of the classroom (see comments p.198 concerning a classroom discussion about smoking and drug-taking). Teachers also feel (often very strongly) that as educators their task is to introduce their students to new topics that will open out new areas of interest for them, acting very much as a guide to their learning (see comments p.203). The problem is compounded by the fact that in Slovakia coursebook topics at secondary level are seen as an integral part of the syllabus and are therefore not to be ignored or glossed over in one quick activity.

Q: What kind of support can be effective in helping teachers cope with unfamiliar materials and teaching methods?

I was asking somebody the other day about why do you think our books were adopted quite so widely in Poland ... She said: "Well. Obviously because they present real English etc. etc. ..... But also because of the teacher's books, because very few teacher's books were quite as explicit. ..... For us everything is laid out on the page on the page ..... this is how you can do it from taking off your hat to putting down your pen at the end of the lesson". And although a lot of teachers would say this is anathema ..... you really don't want to spell out because it restricts their creativity, a lot of people need it. And we wrote our books .... mainly our teacher's books ..... for the large percentage of teachers who aren't native speakers, of which there must be about 80% of the teachers. (p.315-6)

(It's) the same in any sort of skill learning..... people who follow the book too closely in the end are going to get into a narrow thing. But I don't think that's an argument, then, for not giving the assistance and a form of guidance..... Give it to them. If some teachers will go down that route of doing everything to the letter, that's because of their personality. They will always be doing that. And if you're an adventurous teacher, you're not going to look at the teacher's book anyway. You will look at it on

the page and say: "I know how you teach that". And so there will be people who never look at your teacher's books, and they will probably be, if you like, the more imaginative teachers. But hopefully, by providing what we do, we will at least make sure that the teachers are minimally competent, and they're not going to make a total hash of it. (p.316)

I think that videos are an ideal way of helping teachers through a class. What I would like to see is a video pack for each of our markets, which actually takes one of their own teachers using the material with a group of students in their own country in the same sort of physical conditions that they're going to get ..... And not necessarily a perfect lesson at all. I don't think that helps always to have the brilliant teacher doing it ..... but something where one or two things may go wrong. (p.321)

Obviously, we can come out and give a talk about the book, but actually ..... the only value that has is for them actually seeing the face behind the book ..... I don't think it really gives them an idea ..... of how they would present it necessarily in class. Because when you're giving a demo in a talk, it's unlike anything else. But sometimes when a book has been established for some time, I think it's very useful for the author to go out and say: "Let's look at all sorts of different ways that we can handle a dialogue. We know how we've taught it in the teacher's book and it says: 'Do this, that'. Let's think of five new things to do with dialogues, five new things to do with vocabulary exercises". (p.322)

Freebairn mentions three main ways in which support can be provided for teachers who are using a coursebook for the first time: teachers' books, video packs and talks given by the coursebook author. Teachers' books containing detailed classroom procedures are the main means of support for most teachers, and are often seen as providing the methodological syllabus for a particular teaching programme. Freebairn clearly does not see them from this prescriptive perspective, but rather as a series of suggestions which teachers may or may not choose to follow.

What is surprising is the assertion that teachers' books are written primarily for non-native speaker teachers rather than inexperienced teachers generally. When reading the rest of her comments on the subject of which teachers are likely to need support, this seems by implication to equate 'creativity', 'imagination' and 'being adventurous' with being a native speaker teacher, which is surely not intended.

Freebairn is right to say that teachers' book notes will ensure that teachers use the materials in a minimally competent way, but the question arises whether it is desirable for an unskilled teacher to develop a dependency on teachers' notes to ensure a competent performance in class. It is also possible to go a stage further and to argue that such teachers' books are contributing towards the de-skilling of teachers, providing them with 'fast food' recipes for the classroom by means of which they are not required to think a great deal about lesson planning or implementation. This would mean that the Polish teacher who relies on the teachers' book for every step of the lesson from taking off her hat to putting down her pen at the end is failing to develop essential lesson planning skills, for example, and perhaps, in an even worse scenario, gradually losing those which she already has. (For further discussion of this issue see Chapter 7.2. p.188-9).

The coursebook writer is powerless to prevent teachers from interpreting teachers' notes as a step-by-step prescription for how to teach, but if teacher books can be combined with other means of support such as those mentioned by Freebairn, there is a stronger possibility that the message may get through. Her suggestion for video packs, for example, is a useful one, particularly if the videos show local teachers using the new materials, making use of the mother tongue, and not attempting to provide a model performance that might also be taken as a teaching prescription. This approach of course is full of dangers, the main one being that producing a video in which the teacher occasionally 'gets it wrong' can confuse the viewer and even undermine the credibility of the exercise. But it does seem that, whatever the quality of the video and its contents, teachers will be more prepared to subject it to critical appraisal than they would a teachers' book or a talk prepared by the 'expert' author.

Q: What do you think of the track record of ELT publishers in the region?

There's mutual respect, but there's also very much that training aspect in Longman's too, which is good. And they genuinely care for the teachers. ..... You can understand that they have a good record, Longman's. (p.325)

Like all good business people (Longman) want to shift their stock. And when we went into Eastern Europe, when it started opening up ..... they definitely had a policy of

saying: "Let's do it in stages with them. We're not going to give them the very very latest thing". That's how they started out. "If we don't have to, they might be interested in "Strategies" and then come round to "Blueprint" and then .....". But now I think that's faded a bit. I mean, that was the initial idea that you start them off with something, and then you've always got something new to hand them..... But, now that they're so widely travelled and they go to conferences, they know what's around ... they know that there's a new book out, that's actually going to suit them much better than "Blueprint". And so there's no point .... you can't hide it from them any more.(p.325)

Freebairn provides a rather mixed picture of the influence of major ELT publishers in the region. While she maintains during the interview that most (but not all) British publishers set very high standards for their coursebook writers and take the trouble to consult teachers as much as possible, she also points out that publishers and their representatives are business people. She is very honest in describing the process by which publishers who entered the region in the early 1990s profited from a situation in which they were able to provide coursebooks which were not quite up-to-date, holding back more recent publications to sell later. Of course there may well have been a benefit for the recipients as well, in that the cost of the earlier books was no doubt cheaper. But a feeling persists that British publishers were perhaps too eager to adopt their business persona, forgetting about any undertakings to consult and support teachers. One of the consequences of their actions is that many schools in Slovakia are still using titles such as the "Strategies" series published in the late 70s and early 80s, having made a decision to adopt them as their main textbook, a decision which cannot be lightly reversed.

Freebairn maintains that British publishers are now much more sensitive to the needs of teachers in the region, and that teachers in their turn are more critical of imported materials. There is some evidence that local representatives do make a significant contribution to helping teachers cope with change in ELT, and that sometimes this contribution is seen as being more effective than that of teacher trainers (see also Chapter 2, p.58). At the same time, however, the writing and publication of coursebooks remains a business activity, and one in which imported materials from a

few major publishing houses have come to dominate the market and thus have a profound effect on the direction of ELT in the region.

5.6. Interview with Nicholas Butler

Nicholas Butler is Head of ELT Projects at the British Council in London. He has also been responsible for ELTECS, a British Council ELT Contacts Scheme promoting co-operation between ELT specialists in the East and Central European region. The main aim of this interview was to explore the background of British Council involvement in projects promoting change in English language teaching in Slovakia and elsewhere in the region.

Q.When the (British Council) projects were planned, what were the underlying aims ? What about the track record of the projects? Are there particular successes which the Council is proud of ? Are there areas which are a cause for concern?

In terms of the aims of the projects, the aim quite simply was to help the individual countries develop their ELT .... their teaching of English language within their Ministry of Education structures..... to help provide the number of teachers needed to teach English in secondary schools, and increasingly now in primary schools. (p.329)

I think because the Council has been in these particular countries and many countries for ages and ages, and it has a very good reputation, I think it's known to be an honest broker. But I think when the Council came to discuss this offer of support, that it wasn't seen as any form of imperialist imposition .....and I think the way in which the projects have gone in different directions is an indication .... that we have been sensitive to the needs of the countries (p.330-1)

Obviously there is the possibility of anyone coming with money .... "Yes, we'll accept it". And I think there's a little bit of that inevitably in any donor situation. You know, if somebody's coming with money you want to do everything you can not to refuse it..... But I think .... we have to accept ... certainly in Central Europe .... that the level of education as a whole, even during the Communist period was good. It wasn't a question of people having very low level education and therefore wanting to accept anything, as has been the case in South East Asia, Africa etc. The general level of education is good .....then the people had a reasonable idea of what they wanted. And I think the Council came together with them, talked about it and came up with what, I hope, was a very sensible solution. (p.331)

Setting up 55 teacher training colleges (in Poland) , that's quite a remarkable achievement. Of course it was done in conjunction with the Polish Ministry, and they provided all the bricks and mortar ... so they had an enormous investment in this as well. But I think setting that up, and ensuring that that has been a success ... and really is a success ..... is a very definite plus point. .....On the negative side, I'm not sure really. We could look at the fasttrack programme. That really hasn't continued. The fasttrack programme was set up in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, and to a certain extent, to a lesser extent in other countries .... in Slovakia as well..... But increasingly those programmes are being phased out. (p.331-2)

In this interview Butler explains how British Council projects were first set up in the East and Central European region after reports were written by a team of specialist consultants (see also 5.2, interview with H.Widdowson). An initial aim of the projects was clearly quantitative, seeking to help put in place more qualified and skilled teachers of English to meet the anticipated growth in demand for EFL. On the qualitative side, the underlying implied aim was to raise the standards of ELT in the region through individual projects concentrating on teacher development (in-service training), ESP, the provision of teacher resource centres, British Studies and (sometimes) materials development. As the projects developed, priorities would naturally shift from country to country.

Butler believes that the projects were set up in a spirit of co-operation and in good faith on both sides. He rejects the argument that because the British Council was offering funding that this would necessarily mean the superimposition of its own aims on those of the recipient institutions: it would be seen as offering support rather than indulging in the kind of "imperialist imposition" outlined by Phillipson (1992) and other writers. However, from the interview, it is clear that most of the initiatives for the projects have come from the British Council rather than local institutions: the suspicion is therefore that, while the Council may not be deliberately imposing its own educational agenda on countries such as Slovakia, that this is, however, a *de facto* occurrence. The 'fast-track' programme would be a case in point, with Ministries of Education in the region, eager to gain the funding offered by the British Council for the new initiative, but without really believing in its underlying aims.

The seeming failure of the 'fast-track' programme can be contrasted with the success of new teacher training colleges in several countries (notably in Poland), mentioned by Butler. The ingredients which make the difference between success and failure are elusive, with Butler able to offer no real explanation for this. He does, however, point out elsewhere in the interview that it is very difficult to make a real evaluation of the success of a project until many years after the event. It is just possible that the joint initiative of the 'fast-track' degree programme may yet prove to have the positive influence on ELT in the region which was always intended.

Q: What seem to be the principal changes in ELT taking place in the region?

Very simply, there's been an enormous increase in the amount of ELT going on. Whereas before it happened in very small individual institutions, I think there's been an enormous increase on that side. I think that's been significant. In terms of .....other educational change with respect to methodology ..... I think there's no question that before any significant change .....there was the grammar translation method. Which is fine .... and I think reflected the education system at the time. And I think .....it's quite often ELT or methodologies which are in the forefront..... certainly about any change towards a more communicative or ..... participative way of teaching a language. (p.335)

In theory there could well be a little bit of resistance to change, if the vast majority of our students teach in a still traditional form. I actually don't think that's happening at all. I think you'll find some of the more experienced teachers might find changes difficult. But on the whole, I think because there's been a very low level ... a very low number of teachers initially ..... the new teachers that are coming in tend to be younger, tend to be more open, tend to be more westward-looking, and more prepared to think about what they're doing, what they're teaching, how they're teaching. And I think communication seems to be very important, so I think it all goes together ..... to developing a lack of resistance to the changes which this type of ELT methodology is bringing in. (p.335-6)

A student-centred lesson is in fact a bit of a nonsense if it's taken too far. Because ... that means they're getting virtually no input from a native speaker, from a teacher ...And so there needs to be a fair amount of teacher input in, you know, in verbal or in some form or other. So, what I would hope though, with this sort of methodology which is current in the UK and worldwide these days, is that it enables the students to think about why they are studying ..... and tries to make the context in which they're learning the language as real as possible..... And I think there is no problem with that in Central Europe, certainly not with the students because they have an enormous desire to learn English. (p.337)

Butler clearly sees English language teaching and ELT projects in the region at the forefront of educational change, within an optimistic scenario of increasing demand for English being met by new teachers who are younger, more adaptable and more westward-looking. He contrasts this group with "more experienced teachers" who are likely to be more resistant to change and to adhere to grammar-translation methods, which, he considers, reflected the education system before 1989.

There are several assumptions in these arguments which need to be carefully examined. The first is that younger, less experienced teachers will tend to be more open-minded with respect to classroom methodology, and perhaps more capable of critical reflection. The second is that the 'new' communicative, 'student-centred' methodology underlying imported textbooks provides a more accurate reflection of "the education system" in countries such as Slovakia. One final assumption is that the imported methodology is more conducive to making students reflect on their own learning.

The idea that older experienced teachers are more likely to be resistant to change is frequently encountered (see also Chapter 2, p.67), but not as frequently supported by real evidence. However, even if this were the case, it is always worth considering whether a reluctance to change one's classroom practice indicates a greater or a lesser capacity for critical reflection. Similarly, although Butler (and many others) regard the younger, less experienced teacher's ability to embrace change as a desirable positive quality, this adaptability might indicate an inability rather than an ability to be open-minded. The word "resistant" is an unfortunate one in this context since it seems to pre-judge the issue of whether change is desirable. The important thing, surely, is to have the capacity to discriminate between change which will bring benefits and change which may not: this is where the inexperience of the younger teacher can put him/her at a great disadvantage.

The question of which type of ELT methodology is more representative of educational methods as a whole in countries such as Slovakia is too complex to

address in detail here. However, if the methodology of pre-1989 locally-produced coursebooks was consistent with the teaching of other languages such as Russian, German and French, as Butler suggests, it would follow that there would have needed to be great changes in the teaching of all of these languages to satisfy the implied claim that a communicative, student-centred, 'participative' approach is now more typical. Actual evidence (see, for example, Chapter 6.3. p.163-4) seems to indicate that the opposite is true and that teachers of English who are also involved in the teaching of other languages are thus faced with a dilemma.

Butler's comments concerning 'student-centred' lessons indicate that he is not entirely convinced by the more excessive claims made for the superiority of communicative methodology, but favours an approach in which a recognition for the need for a certain amount of teacher input in each English lesson is balanced with a recognition that students will need to have a certain degree of independence from the teacher, and should be actively encouraged to reflect on their own learning as much as possible. The 'new' imported methodology will, he believes, encourage learners more in this respect by building on their motivation to learn and allowing them a greater degree of creativity.

Q: What kind of support needs to be given to teachers in a context of change? Do we need new initiatives, or should we continue with what we're doing?

I would hope that the work which we have been doing (say) over the last 8 years in Slovakia has set up structures, or has developed a cadre (to use an old-fashioned term) of teacher trainers in Slovakia ..... Slovak teacher trainers, who will be able to provide that support to new inexperienced, up- and-coming teachers . That's not to say that the Council or outside agencies won't be involved at all, but I think it will be a totally different form of support ..... that it should then be really requests coming from Slovakia, the Slovak Ministry of Education, teacher training institutions .... to provide certain input in some form ..... probably in the form of somebody coming out to conduct (let's say) a course. (p.338)

The whole point of sustainability is that you provide input; the locals take it on board and adapt in the way they want to; then they can carry on with the work after British funding is withdrawn, massive British funding is withdrawn, or US funding or whatever ..... funding from the World Bank or whatever. And so, in essence, it's the responsibility of the local teachers, the local authorities. But, knowing that they can

come to the Council, or whoever, to discuss (openly one would hope) ways in which further support might be provided. (p.339)

Butler's views concerning the impact and sustainability of ELT projects on teachers in the region are straightforward. He believes that a transfer of expertise to certain key individuals will, in the right circumstances, ensure that support for teachers will continue even after a project has reached the end of its lifespan. The success of a project is therefore, to a large extent, judged according to whether such a transfer of skills and/or resources has been seen to take place from the specialist outsider to the local counterparts.

This is a surprisingly simplistic way of viewing project development. It assumes that the specialist outsider has enough information to be able to assess the needs of local teachers, that (s)he possesses skills, knowledge or resources that the locals lack, that such skills etc. can successfully be transferred to a local counterpart, who in turn will be able to apply them to help introduce or to support teachers who are introducing innovation in their teaching. The end product of this process is visualized by an unnamed consultant writing in the British Council publication "Voices from the New Democracies" (1996:14), distributed to ELTECS members and mentioned by Butler during the interview:

Six years on, it can be demonstrated that the ELT expertise and resources that Britain provided has led to significant improvements in the effectiveness of English language teachers throughout the region. But it has led to much more than that: by introducing a project approach to development at a time of great change within these societies, Britain has helped establish a cadre of professionals who are skilled in the management of change, and, most important, capable of further educational innovations which will undoubtedly be required.

Such claims are worrying in that they appear to take no account of the professional skills, expertise and tradition of learning of the educational establishments of East and Central European countries (see also interview with H.Widdowson). Educational change and the development of high quality English Language Teaching appear to have been reduced to projects involving a one-way handover of expertise

from outsider to chosen counterpart. The idea of development being a two-way process in which both parties must have an input is not considered. Similarly, educational change is viewed very much as a top-down planned process, rather than a phenomenon which emerges of its own accord.

5.7. Summary

The interviews reported in this chapter have provided five very different perspectives on educational change and its effects within the context of this case study. A strong impression which remains with the reader of the transcripts (see Appendices E-I) concerns the need in any discussion of Slovak educational change to take account of the important influence of the regional educational and linguistic traditions described by three of the interviewees (Prof.Widdowson, Dr.Dovciak and Prof. Tandlichova) and defended to a certain extent by each of them. An interesting contrast is provided by the views of the other two interview respondents (I.Freebairn and N.Butler), who appear to emphasize the transferability of language teaching materials, methods and approaches from one context to another, being less concerned with the durability of educational traditions than with the provision of new opportunities for teachers and their students by means of imported materials and/or teacher education projects.

Although the original stated intention of the five interviews (see Chapter 3.5) was to provide a certain amount of background data, which would put into perspective the views of Slovak teachers as expressed in focus groups and pre-lesson and post-lesson interviews, in practice it can be argued that the interviews reported in this chapter have exceeded their brief, in that the explanations of educational change in Slovak ELT and the implications of the effects of change presented by interviewees can themselves be considered as interesting primary (rather than background) data, which will be further analysed in Chapter 8.

The next two chapters will aim to present the voices of Slovak teachers giving their own perspective on the change process, describing the impact of new materials, methods and approaches on their classroom practice.

CHAPTER 6: THE CASE STUDY REPORT - FOCUS GROUPS

6.1. Introduction

In Chapter 3.6. the characteristics and benefits of focus group interviews were extensively discussed and mention was made of their suitability for exploratory research (see p.98). Within the format of this case study they represent the first source of primary data, seeking to present the voices of teachers who are having to cope with rapid educational change. After the piloting of the technique (see Ch.3. p.101), two kinds of focus groups were included within the schedule. The first kind were closer to the classic ideas concerning the technique (see Krueger 1994), with specially invited groups of teachers coming from different schools. The second type, however, took place in rather different circumstances and were closely connected with the second source of primary data, a classroom observation schedule (see Chapter 3.7). They consisted of teachers working together in the same designated Slovak secondary school (in the towns of Dolny Kubin & Presov) and were conducted during a week's programme of lesson observations and team-teaching with their participants. In each case it was originally planned for the focus group to precede the week's schedule, but in fact it proved easier to integrate the interview into the middle of the week. Four focus groups were conducted in this order:-

* *Interview with Central Slovak basic school teachers, British Council, B.Bystrica*
Moderator: Eva Homolova, Assistant moderator: Desmond Thomas
Interview conducted in Slovak, transcribed and translated into English (by I.Garayova)

* *Interview with gymnazium teachers, Dolny Kubin gymnazium*
Moderator: Jozef Medvecky, Assistant moderator: Desmond Thomas
Interview conducted in Slovak, transcribed and translated into English (by Z.Molcanova)

* *Interview with gymnazium teachers, Raymana gymnazium, Presov*
Moderator: Desmond Thomas
Interview conducted in English and transcribed.

* *Interview with East Slovak requalifying teachers, Presov University*
Moderator: Desmond Thomas , Assistant moderator: Zuzana Strakova
Interview conducted in English. Notes taken by moderator & assistant moderator.

The focus group question schedule changed very little from its original Slovak version to the English version preferred in the two later interviews, with only a slight re-phrasing of certain questions. The questions which appear below, and which were used in interviews 3 and 4, also appeared in Slovak in interviews 1 and 2. They include changes from the original intended model put into effect after the piloting exercise (see Chapter 3.6. p.102-3):

Q1. Introduce yourself to the group.
Where do you work? How long have you been working there?
How much experience do you have as a teacher? And as an English teacher?

Q2. What are your feelings concerning your job? Do you enjoy it?
Do you feel appreciated by your school, pupils, colleagues, parents?
What problems do you encounter in your work? How do you deal with them?

Q3. What type of coursebook materials do you prefer to use?
Do you encounter any problems using these materials?
How do you prefer to assess your students' progress?

Q4. Do you think teaching English is becoming easier or more difficult? Why?
How would you describe the main changes which have taken place (since 1989)?
Are these changes mainly positive or negative?
What are the effects of change from your point of view?
How do you cope with sudden change?

Q5. What support do you receive in your work? Is this support adequate?
What kind of support would you like to receive? Whose responsibility is it to provide it?

These questions were supplemented by extra questions, which arose naturally in the course of each interview. For several reasons English was used rather than Slovak in the later interviews. Firstly, achieving a precise translation of teachers' opinions in the first interviews proved to be extremely difficult, with certain technical terms in each language refusing to be easily translated. An example of this would be the word 'observation' as in 'lesson observation', for which the Slovak equivalent puts across the idea of 'listening in', rather than watching what happens. A second problematic aspect of using Slovak in the interviews was that this eliminated the possibility of the researcher being able to act as

moderator; as a result, in the early interviews, opportunities for clarifying some of the teachers' opinions which related directly to research questions were lost.

6.2. Focus Group 1: Basic School Teachers from Central Slovakia

Participants in this focus group had all completed the survey questionnaire, and had expressed an interest in being interviewed. Six of these volunteer teachers were invited by the local *Metodicke Centrum* to attend the interview at the British Council, and all accepted. Each participant was a basic school teacher from a different school in Central Slovakia; however, some of them had already met professionally at regional workshops or seminars. The moderator was Eva Homolova (Matej Bel University), with Desmond Thomas assisting. Discussion concerned three main topics: their feelings concerning the advantages and disadvantages of their job at the present moment, their opinions of the coursebook materials which are available for them to use, and their reactions to the changing nature of their work.

All of the teachers in this group were female and in the 30-45 age range. Among them, Z. was a highly experienced teacher at basic school levels, with some secondary and teacher training experience as well. L. was a requalifying teacher with 6 years' ELT experience. M. had 7 years' experience, having been a teacher of Slovak before 1990. Mj. was less experienced (she did not specify the number of years) and confessed to finding the work difficult. S. had been teaching for 6 years, and A. for three. Most of the teachers were teaching all nine basic school levels (ages 6-14) .

Q: What are your feelings concerning your job?

A: At first I think that I haven't taught anything. The satisfaction is not there ..... From the parents side, there is no appreciation, but the parents are demanding, especially of those small children. .....But we always feel appreciated by those small children.(p.343)

M: I have experienced the entire scale of emotions from great joy to deep depression. For example, sometimes I feel like a gold digger among that group of about 18 children where only two or three are capable ..... so that is like a little piece of gold. (p.343)

Z: It is often negative motivation that we feel ..... there are no responses, even though there is a good feeling from the students' side ..... But we also need something from the other side, yes, because we have to live and we often divide our attention in too many directions. (p.346)

S: What is the motivation then when the children are not willing, when they are not interested, when they are not paying attention? This is the most demotivating question for me. If they are already not interested, what shall I do next? (p.347)

Like teachers in many other situations, these individuals from different schools make it clear that they feel generally unappreciated and pressured from all sides, with parents especially being more critical or less supportive than previously. There is also a general agreement that older students are less willing to work hard than before, while the younger children remain enthusiastic. No real explanation is offered for this: it could be that the older children are less prepared to conform than they were in pre-1989 classes whenever the topic of the lesson does not interest them, thus supporting Freebairn's arguments (see Ch.5, p.142-3) concerning student motivation. Alternatively, it could mean that teenage students now have more opportunities in life and are more prepared to take them for granted, thus lessening their desire to really make an effort in order to achieve their goals. This would be the preferred interpretation of these teachers, based on what they said throughout the interview.

Q: What type of coursebook materials do you prefer to use? Could you say something about that, how long have you been using them, how satisfied are you with them?

Mj: It seems to me whether it is "Tip Top", "Project" or it is "Discoveries" ..... that the textbook has a horrible beginning. At the beginning there are already types of questions which are difficult for Slovak children who have just been playing and reciting rhymes to understand ..... And suddenly they are there, in that book. (p.348)

Mj: There isn't enough grammar. When I finish a year or a book I ask the children for feedback, and they always say there are not enough exercises, that the grammar is difficult. (p.354)

S: What our students miss is something like the glossary of "Discoveries" ....it is missing in "Project English"..... I have to buy it or I have to recommend them to buy it because to look for a word in a big dictionary, it is for them, for the fifth year a problem. (p.352)

M: I personally miss, both in "Discoveries" and "Project", jazz chants, rhymes and songs. And it also would be good to include some revision lessons as in "Discoveries" after each unit because they are too long. Some revision lessons with more interesting activities. (p.355)

M: I would like to add my opinion about "Project English" . When I open it, when we are going to work with it, those long instructions 'jump out' at me in many exercises. And I have to explain them to pupils and it takes time. (p.356)

Z: I think that an ideal book does not exist since all of us are different..... each of us has a certain personality, different things suit us. So I admit that I personally like "Project English" very much. Of course I started to teach with traditional textbooks. Then the "Project" series came. I started to use "Project" in 1991, but since "Discoveries" was the recommended book, we received them and I used them. ..... I don't want to say that "Discoveries" is not a good book, but it did not suit me ..... the reason is the one which you have all said. Yes .... that grammar. In my opinion "Discoveries" could be a very suitable book for children living in English-speaking countries. .... but not in Slovakia where children have only two or three lessons a week. (p.357)

Teachers in the group appreciate the amount of choice which they consider that they have now and do not want to turn back the clock *(S: I wouldn't go back to those old textbooks)*. But they are also prepared to provide detailed criticism of the perceived weak points of the new recommended coursebooks for schools. Different individuals prefer different titles with there being no agreement as to the most suitable or most effective imported coursebook for basic schools.

One point where there was general agreement concerned the unsuitability of imported coursebooks for complete beginners. All of the teachers had had difficult experiences introducing their beginner level learners to the new materials, citing problems such as difficult instructions in English, lack of an English-Slovak glossary, unfamiliar exercise types, and so on. The solution adopted for these problems in many schools seems to have

been the re-introduction of Tandlichova's "Anglictina", even where this is no longer the recommended book for beginners. After several months' study with the more familiar format of "Anglictina", children and their teachers feel more confident about approaching the early units of books such as "Project English".

There is also the question of the grammar content of the new books. Z. cited the example of a girl who reached secondary school level at a great disadvantage. This, according to Z., was due to the fact that the recommended title for basic schools at the time, "Discoveries", did not include sufficient practice of several verb tenses in its syllabus. The secondary school teacher expected this material to have been covered, and the girl, though intelligent, was in despair when she failed test after test prepared by her new teacher. This story illustrates the difficulty of matching various parts of the English language syllabus when change takes place at one point rather than throughout the system.

The teachers also discussed how they would characterize their ideal coursebook with Z. and A. disagreeing as to whether it would be possible to produce a book that teachers would not have to supplement. Most of the group were in fact using other imported materials to supplement the recommended title rather than creating their own worksheets. Although the availability of an ever-increasing range of possible supplementary materials is to be welcomed, the question of convenience or creativity is once again raised. The teachers who were working before 1989 were forced to adopt ingenious solutions to make coursebook materials more accessible and more motivating for their students: their present situation is that they can now turn to the photocopier for instant solutions to their problems.

Q: Do you think the teaching of English is easier or more difficult nowadays? What changes have taken place and how have these changes affected your work?

S: Taking into consideration the availability of materials, it seems to me easier because we have a much better choice of textbooks and recordings. But it seems to me more difficult too .... maybe because of changes in groups of students or loss of special language classes. Because I think that children are influenced more by the lack of stimulus at home, by the hours spent in front of TV and computers. It seems to me that year by year it is more difficult to teach .... that if there is a lack of interest in education, then education is not valued very much. (p.359-60)

M: I think not only English teachers, but also teachers of other subjects would say that children were different before. But the type of life meant that children were more passive and less creative. (p.360)

Z: I had a short stay abroad in Denmark organized by the Tempus programme. It is common there that in the schools there is a big room where you can find a photocopier. Each teacher who needs to copy something makes her own copies. Most of us have a great collection of perfect materials, but unfortunately only we have them ..... I am unable to pass them on to the children. (p.362)

M: When I compare myself as a teacher of English with teachers of German, I think we have a great time. We have seminars, many meetings .... I think that the British Council and everything concerning teaching English ..... that they care for us very well. The teachers of German don't have anything really. I think we are able to make choices. There are always offers so that we can improve ourselves and our teaching. (p.362)

Mj: I would like to add something that has been most satisfying for me. It does not refer to materials or textbooks in particular, but it is the fact that the gate of creativity has been opened. I felt restricted before by those ..... teaching plans ..... And now from those projects and from those children you can dig out something which is personal .... and I get on well with project work. I have to be happy because even the children who don't produce anything ..... suddenly they bring in something wonderful, personal .... and they can express it in English. So the comparison between the past and the present has brought a nice result ..... that creativity is really open, and each child is creative.(p.364)

The teachers were mostly positive about change and the possibilities for a more creative approach to learning which had been brought about by the influx of new materials. Before 1989 the prescribed teaching plans which were subject to inspection (see Tandlichova interview, p.295) restricted the teacher's creativity and were seen to

encourage uniformity, whatever the group and whatever its special needs. The approach adopted by coursebooks such as "Project English" appears to have liberated not only teachers but their students as well, allowing them to make a more personal contribution to their English lessons. The comparison made by M. with teachers of German is interesting, because it indicates that in other subject areas there remain fewer choices to be made, with teachers following an established pattern of teaching and learning and with fewer creative opportunities.

But freedom of choice brings its own problems, and teachers feel more pressure on themselves as a result. Teachers feel pressurized by change because of their students, because of materials (or the lack of them), and because of their own feelings of inadequacy or lack of preparation. Even this group of relatively confident, experienced individuals expressed concern about the shift in students' attitudes, perhaps reflecting an underlying doubt about their own authority and status as leaders in the classroom (see also this chapter pp.169-70). It is interesting to enquire whether they really believe that their students value education less, or whether it is their own teaching which is now more subject to criticism from students who are no longer passive participants in their own education.

As far as lack of resources is concerned, it is rather ironic that the biggest complaint now seems to be the inadequacy of photocopying equipment. Teachers would like to provide their students with copies of (mainly pirated) supplementary materials; parents now seem to expect these handouts, and are even prepared to provide money for the teachers to supply them. But it is clear from the interview that the teachers regard the process of "begging for extra money" as rather demeaning, and ultimately undermining their authority. Yet they are seemingly unable to do without photocopied materials to supplement their teaching. What seems at first sight to be a rather trivial problem actually does contribute significantly to pressures felt by teachers resulting from change.

6.3. Focus Group 2: Dolny Kubin Gymnazium Teachers

This focus group consisted of four teachers from the same school, two of whom were also being observed by (and were co-teaching with) the researcher during a week's visit to the school. Three of the teachers, (A.,T. and V.) were young and inexperienced; two of these, (A. and T.) were qualified, with V. clearly intending to teach English only as a temporary job (perhaps this explains the fact that she did not contribute greatly towards the discussion). The fourth teacher, E., returned from maternity leave just to take part in the focus group discussion. The moderator was Jozef Medvecky, (J.), head of the English department at the same school; Desmond Thomas acted as assistant moderator. The discussion centred on the same topics as Focus Group 1.

Q: What are your feelings concerning your work?

A: I think that quite a big problem ... ... is that the teaching load is very high. So the work is not done, of course. It is not possible to do it properly.... I have 28 hours. I also teach the lower classes, the first and the third grades, because this is an 8-year gymnazium, and I hadn't expected at all that I would be teaching such small children. I have a lot of problems to get used to teaching younger students. They require a different approach ..... (p.366)

T: I also agree with the problem of high teaching loads .....If I had a need to prepare something without the student book, I would not manage it. It also happens that I neglect some classes or students because they are slower. There is simply no time. And then, concerning support for languages ..... at this school every subject is treated the same as one another. There is a tendency here to have as few problems as possible. But there are also problems in getting books and other material which we need apart from the usual students' books. Simply, the attitude is like this : you must be satisfied with just one book, the same as the other teachers of the other subjects. (p.366-7)

E: It is important to be strong enough to be able to fight for one's opinions and to get through all the demands concerning English language at the school; it is important to be strong enough to fight for some material or something, because in general not much is given to languages. (p.367)

These teachers clearly feel less in control of their work than the basic school teachers from focus group 1. Practical problems are their main concern with teaching loads being

regarded as far too heavy and the range of different levels forcing them to be very adaptable. Young teachers such as A. are teaching most of the levels for the first time, which means having to cope with a range of new materials. A. also feels that she is not adequately prepared to teach the younger children from *prima* and *sekunda* classes (aged 11-12) , who require a very different approach from 18 year olds. A few years ago, *gymnazia* teachers would not have been asked to teach such young children; now because of changes in many schools to the 8-year *gymnazium* system (making secondary schools expand to act as a kind of middle school as well), more pressure has been put on individual teachers in this way.

The teachers clearly feel that there is little support for language teaching within the school, and that English teachers are expected to teach in the same way as teachers of other subjects. If one book is sufficient for a teacher of Slovak or German, why, it is argued, should English teachers need extra resources or support? This pressure to conform with the teaching of other subjects within a school is an aspect of teaching which is very often overlooked by subject-specific educational planners and teacher trainers. The only suggested solution to this dilemma is for them to be prepared to fight for what they need, as proposed by E.

Q: What type of coursebooks do you prefer to use? Which books are more suitable, and what makes them suitable?

T: I like "Headway" .... I am just getting to know it better (I mean the whole series) because it is new .... there is a mix of everything ..... grammar, listening, reading, activities for writing ..... simply everything and at a suitable level. Even the articles are quite interesting..... most students starting to learn English can appreciate them. Maybe for older students these textbooks are sometimes ..... not so suitable because the things mentioned there ..... Western values ..... in our country these articles simply do not say anything. ..... But otherwise they are good for teaching ..... and of course they have teachers' books where everything is explained. (p.368)

T: ("Headway") is more suitable for adults. There are topics ..... such as bank loans, job experiences, which are simply not interesting for the students. These themes are probably the biggest problem in the intermediate book. As well as this, there is very complex

grammar..... And listening ..... there is a problem with listening. In those intermediate books the listening (material) is difficult. We need to work on it. The teachers' book doesn't really explain how to do it better. (p.369)

E: I think we will not find a better book than "Headway"..... I can make a comparison with "Blueprint". For example at Business Secondary Schools teachers don't approve of "Headway" books ..... they find them difficult and complicated for students, and so I think they are appropriate books for the gymnazium. A certain amount of thinking is required and a greater capability on the part of the students. (p.370)

T: What we have just done (in class) doesn't mean anything to them. It just occurred to me ..... Jane Fonda ..... pre-intermediate ..... They looked at me ..... What's going on? ..... It didn't mean anything to them. So it was reading for reading's sake in fact. (p.373)

A: Sometimes we can see ..... (these texts) are intended for older students or (students) in other parts of the world. In America they would surely know what's going on ..... in Germany they know it too, but not here. It doesn't interest them, and they don't know anything about it. (p.373)

J: Surely, from the point of view of content it is very debatable what should be there. It must be the teacher who has to have flexibility to adjust, to adapt, to change. (p.373)

Like the basic school teachers in focus group 1, these teachers generally welcome the range of new materials which have become available in Slovakia. They are particularly appreciative of the fact that coursebook series such as "Headway" appear at first sight to cover all of their basic requirements . Both A. and T. are heavily reliant on the coursebook teachers' book to help them plan their lessons. This dependency is further complicated by their frenetic teaching schedules.

Step-by-step teaching procedures written by a coursebook author in the UK might require substantial adaptation to cater for the needs of Slovak learners, and if they are allowed to drive the teaching syllabus without being subjected to critical appraisal, might not be providing the students with the English that they need to face important examinations such as the *maturita* (see Ch.7, p.190 and 193 for further discussion of this).

The one area where the teachers are openly critical of the new materials is with respect to the topic areas. Some, such as "job experiences" or "bank loans", are regarded as unsuitable because they are too adult. Other unspecified topics are seen as being too "Westernized". Others are rejected on the grounds that they are too unfamiliar, acceptable perhaps in Germany or America, but not in Slovakia. Finally there are some which just seem irrelevant to teenage Slovak learners.

One solution to this problem would, of course, be to introduce locally-produced materials, but reactions to this suggestion (made by J. in the interview) were extremely negative. For example:

A: Why do something new if there is already something good? They should try to make it more accessible ..... To make something that already exists seems unnecessary to me .... just for the sake of doing something new. (p.375)

J: From the school's point of view, for example ..... topics concerning Slovakia ..... But again, it would have to be done in such a way as to not make students memorize them. (p.376)

T: They would think in Slovak using that kind of textbook. (p.375)

The teachers seem to be strongly influenced by their memories of the inadequacies of locally-produced pre-1989 materials. Interestingly, they also seem to fear the danger of over-familiar topics being memorized, with memorization being seen perhaps as an unwelcome return to one aspect of traditional practice. The conclusion must be that these teachers are prepared to defend the positive aspects of using imported coursebooks, accepting the need to put up with some minor inconveniences. In return, they will gain not just attractive materials which they can teach from, but materials which will also plan their teaching down to the last details of individual lessons.

Q: Is teaching a foreign language more demanding and difficult nowadays?

A: I can compare it to when I was a student before 1989. Now it seems to be better. Access to foreign languages is more common ..... and ..... these textbooks force teachers to teach in a more interesting way. (p.373)

A: Surely it is more interesting because those old socialist textbooks were not appropriate ..... the themes were not suitable or adequate. There was no connection with reality, I think. ..... So teachers are better off and students are more motivated. (p.374)

E: At the beginning I was very stubborn with new things. I taught for myself ..... I didn't consider the school. But now, of course it isn't possible to compare. I didn't like languages very much .... and now I teach them ..... so it seems that something must have changed. (p.374)

T: Probably it will be more difficult ..... teaching thinking about the financial point of view. Those books are year after year more expensive, so in two years it won't be possible for our students to buy them. (p.374)

J: Different levels of students come to our school who, for me, now in this fourth year, provide a difficult challenge. We have students who lack basic knowledge in one group with students who are fluent, and it is a catastrophe. (p.374)

These teachers were mostly very positive about change, although, because of their inexperience, they were obliged to compare their situation as *learners* before 1989 with their situation as teachers in the post-1989 period. They believe their way of teaching using imported materials and methodologies to be more motivating for learners than the way in which they themselves were taught. Significantly, they also feel that their present students have many opportunities to be exposed to English (such as through MTV and foreign films) that were denied to them.

It is interesting that the teachers do not appear to see the problems and pressures which they face as being consequences of educational change. It could be argued, for example, that their heavy workload would seem much lighter, if like their German colleagues, they were expected to teach from the same textbook at all times. The workload itself could be

seen as a consequence of the rising demand for English, and parental pressure for students to learn as much English as possible - another aspect of the educational changes which are taking place. Instead, the teachers blame the school organization and "the system" for their problems. They also tend to see practical problems (such as the cost of new textbooks or the fact that their groups tend to contain more mixed levels of ability) in isolation rather than as part of one larger problem caused by the rise in demand for English teaching and sudden changes in the way in which English is taught and learnt. The problem mentioned by J., that of mixed ability groups, is a case in point since there is much evidence to suggest that the new opportunities opening up for at least some of their students (such as being able to travel to English-speaking countries) are one of the reasons for some individuals making faster progress (see also focus group notes, p.391).

6. 4. Focus Group 3: Raymana Gymnazium (Presov) Teachers

This focus group consisted of four teachers from the same school, all of whom were also being observed by (and were co-teaching with) myself during a week's visit to the school. All four of the teachers, G., T., M. and J., were highly experienced (in sharp contrast with the Dolny Kubin participants), and all had been teaching English before the 1989 revolution as well as afterwards. I acted as moderator on this occasion. The discussion followed a question schedule which was very similar to that of the two previous groups. However, within the discussion a stronger emphasis was given to the later questions (see p.156) which focussed on the more problematic effects of change. An added element in this focus group was an extension of the debate concerning the suitability of imported teaching materials to include testing materials as well.

The focus group took place after I had already visited several classes and had talked to all the teachers informally about their work (see journal notes , p.426). As a result, there are several references to these visits and informal interviews made during the course of the focus group itself.

Q: What are your feelings about teaching English?

M: I will always (be an) enthusiastic teacher ..... because if not I couldn't have stayed here for such a long time. But after all these changes in our country even the work in the classes, you know, many times gets worse, because students sometimes forget to be well-educated, well-conducted and sometimes there is a problem with discipline. ..... But what's bad (is) that we've got you know more and more work and we don't feel overpaid and that is what makes us sometimes you know very disillusioned. (p.378-9)

T: I love teaching but I hate testing or questioning them..... We play games, I've told them stories and we discuss.... Everything's OK. We love each other ..... we are happy. Then there comes the "D" day and I have to find a text or just question them because our students have to have at least one mark for oral answers.....We've got just 5 marks. And 5 is failure. And I think it's horrible..... it's horrible to divide the whole class of completely different people into 5 groups. (p.379)

G: Well the children are successful so we are appreciated. For example from the universities ... you saw the tests . So if their children are successful, we are appreciated several years later. (p.380)

J: I give them a lot of things ... it's my energy, my time and I don't see the results. So this is .... I think the thing which I don't like in this job. (p.380)

G: Teaching a foreign language requires a lot of additional material. So we have to look for it for a long time..... . Because there are other subjects (where) once you know something, so it's OK. ..... But it's not enough for us to speak English and go to the class. We have to prepare additional material, a lot of it. (p.381)

T: And about starting a new coursebook. That's something horrible. I don't know if any other of our colleagues can imagine .... (p.381)

The collective English teaching experience of the four teachers in this group amounts to an impressive 89 years, without counting extra years of teaching other subjects such as Slovak. All of them are thus in a very good position to compare what it was like to be a teacher in the pre-1989 period with what it is like now. M's comments concerning the change in behaviour of students during that period reflect those of other experienced teachers in focus group 1. It seems that the authority and the status of teachers are more in question now than at any other previous time. This, combined with a perceived increase in workload, is causing much disillusionment.

According to G's comment, teachers can feel appreciated when they are judged by the only available objective measure, success in school-leaving and university entrance exams. This, of course, puts much pressure on the teachers to aim their teaching in these directions. But the constant requirement to test and to assess can itself be highly demotivating, as T. suggests. The tradition of grading oral activities in class, giving a mark from 1 (= excellent) to 5 and entering these grades in an official class register means that much teaching time is in fact devoted to testing. The situation is made worse by the fact that none of the imported coursebook materials have been designed to include regular oral assessment of this kind, so the testing has really to be imposed upon materials designed for teaching.

Turning teaching materials into tests is just one of the ways that these teachers find they have to adapt the coursebook. They also, according to G., spend a lot of time looking for additional material to supplement some of the topics (see notes on G's lesson, Chapter 7 p.200). There is a particular problem when the class is starting a new coursebook and it is unfamiliar both to pupils and teachers. Members of the group felt quite strongly that colleagues teaching other subjects do not have their workloads increased in this way, since, it is suggested, it is sufficient for them to 'know' their subject to enable them to go into class and teach it.

Q: What coursebooks do you prefer to use? What problems do you encounter using them?

T: English for us is always a foreign language..... And every new coursebook .... it's really sometimes quite a new language for us because English is changing so rapidly that we can't keep the pace. We can't keep up with it. We have no contact. There is no leaflet that will announce that "this is new", or something. Where can we find it? How can I learn that? (p.382-3)

G: When you came to my lesson there was in the listening Bovril, or something like that. You have to drink Bovril. But I don't know what it is. It's not in the teachers' book. So how can I know what Bovril is? What is it by the way? (p.383)

J: Or another example and you were a witness of it. I wrote down the question from the teachers' book. It was " whom did he ....?" .....It was from the teacher's book . And then you told me that it's an old word .... in English they don't use "whom". (p.383-4)

G: For me for example I would need more exercises practising grammar in the textbooks. So it's my ideal but I know it's absolutely idealistic ..... to form a series of books ..... for students who have a Slavic language as the native language. Then you would see what kind of grammar we need. (p.396)

T: What I would like to have in a textbook is what G. said .... much more grammar exercises, and all these structures that our students can't learn because our language is completely different. Or you can have the list from our old textbooks. They are old but all the structures are there ..... I saw "Hotline" and "Streetwise": what I don't like is vocabulary written at the back of the textbook.....It should be in the units..... maybe after the text..... or at the end of the unit. Then there is a lack of phrases and idioms. These new students know less phrases and idioms than the older ones.....And then another thing, when there is vocabulary, it is without any transcription. Our students .... I think every country's students ..... learn the international transcription. Why isn't there the transcription? Your textbooks are really very nice but this doesn't make our work or the work of students easier. (p.397)

Teachers in this group, perhaps because they have used a wide variety of ELT materials during their careers, seemed more prepared to subject imported coursebooks to detailed critical appraisal than was the case in focus groups 1 and 2. Key problem areas identified included the language used in coursebooks, the language syllabus, the topic syllabus and coursebook structure and organization.

The kind of language problems experienced by the teachers had less to do with the target language of individual coursebook units and more with new or seemingly incorrect incidental items which took them by surprise, and for which there was no guidance in the teacher's book. T's comments concerning the rapid change in the English language and the occurrences of new unfamiliar items in coursebooks written by native speakers in the UK or USA recall those of writers such as Freebairn (see p.319-20), who argues for the inclusion of such items. A particular problem for the teacher is when, say, a slang expression can be understood by some of the pupils having been acquired from a pop

song or TV programme, while the teacher, supposedly the language authority in the classroom, is ignorant of its meaning.

The standing of the teacher in the classroom can also depend on her ability to decide in favour of what is grammatically correct and what is incorrect. Unfortunately, here too imported coursebooks can undermine her certainties. Pre-1989 coursebooks tended to prescribe grammar rather than describing it, with the result that there is still an expectation on the part of both teacher and pupils of clear distinctions between 'right' and 'wrong' from more recently-produced imported coursebooks. However, since these often actively promote variations in pronunciation or even the use of 'non-standard' grammar and vocabulary items, the result is an apparent conflict between the authority of the book and the authority of the teacher.

The teachers also have reservations about the syllabus on which imported books are based (especially the grammar syllabus) and their structure and organization. T., in particular, feels that books such as "Hotline" and "Streetwise" need more grammar practice exercises and compare unfavourably with older textbooks in this respect. The idea that new vocabulary ought to be at the end of each unit (complete with phonetic transcriptions) is also a throwback to the conventions of older Slovak-produced textbooks. It is, of course, possible to adapt the materials so that they will both provide more practice opportunities and seem more user-friendly to Slovak learners, but this means once again increasing the workload.

Discussion then focussed on the problematic relationship between imported teaching materials and the two main forms of assessment, the school-leaving *maturita* and university entrance exams.

T: I think all the entrance exams are of a far higher level than our curriculum ..... The basic test should be done on such a level that is corresponding with what we teach ..... Our students are overloaded. (p.386)

G: I, for example, combine "Strategies" with our own books, used under socialism. And I teach grammar from there because it is explained and is compared with Slovak. And Slovak is so different, Slovak grammar. There are good exercises. I've even (had) groups where the students asked me to do it .....The lessons are boring, but the students appreciate it very much. They don't have to pay for private lessons to be prepared for school-leaving exams. (p.387-8)

The teachers identified two specific problems which they had to face. The first was having to teach at two different levels at the same time, since university entrance level is set artificially high. The second is the unsuitability of imported materials for some of the exam preparation. The first problem, it would seem, can only be solved by the education authorities. But, G., like many other teachers, is attempting to address the second problem, combining the functional approach of the school's main coursebook series, "Strategies" with the structural approach of older locally-produced books. This tactic is seen by the teachers to pay dividends, making up in particular for the lack of grammar practice in imported coursebooks, when the requirement is to prepare students so that they have a good knowledge of grammar as well as an ability to use it.

Q: Do you think teaching English is becoming more easier or more difficult? What kind of changes have taken place since 1989?

M: (Students) don't want to prepare well .... they are lazy to do this systematic ... work at home. It's a different attitude to duties and assignments. And ... parents are a bit different. They are more and more in business. They're very very busy. And they think that if they earn much money, they think that teachers who don't are .... well, not people who are respectful .... or perhaps they don't respect us very much. (p.389)

T: I think we have to work much more than before. .... We decided to teach from "Strategies". They were 4 hard years going through a new textbook. (p.390)

M: ... I can say that since 1989 or 1989 I learned myself you know, each year one coursebook .... for over 8 years. I teach this one book a year, a new one. (p.390)

G: When I started teaching I taught at the language school and we could choose whatever book we wanted. So I taught Eckersley "Essential English", Hornby ..... Alexander. My headmistress forced me to use the direct method.... everything, I had to

try everything. And then we really used the old books. ..... And you know nothing is black and white..... So there were some advantages because for example we knew what we could expect from the students. We knew the books and what they should have known. Now we don't know, and at the university they don't know. (p.390-1)

G: What is very difficult nowadays is that a lot of students study abroad. They study in the USA mostly. They come here and they go on after one year's interruption ..... And they sit in the class and your job becomes much more difficult because they can hear your mistakes ..... So we are in a very disadvantaged position. (p.391)

Although teachers in the group feel positive about many of the changes which they have seen taking place in ELT, there are several areas which are a cause for concern. The first is the question of the status, not just of individual teachers, but of the entire teaching profession. In M's view, for example, changes in society have seemed to downgrade the teacher in the eyes of pupils and their parents. She seems to be wondering whether money is now valued much more than education in Slovakia, and whether this is having its effect on the attitudes and the behaviour of students. This perception of a lack of respect may also be compounded by the fact that many students now have the resources to study in English-speaking countries (unlike their teachers) and can seem to constitute a direct threat to the authority of the teacher when they return.

The second perceived negative effect of change is a dramatic increase in the workload of teachers, when compared with the situation of either English teachers in the past or teachers of other subjects in the present. All the teachers felt pressurized by the amount of work and by the need for their students to be successful in important examinations which were becoming more and more competitive, with the teachers competing against each other as well as the students.

The final problematic effect of change seems to be the uncertainty which it has brought about. As G. points out, before 1989 pupils knew what to expect from their teachers and teachers knew what to expect from their students. Both parties seemed comfortable with a system in which coursebooks were written to cater for a syllabus which led towards the

maturita exam, and, in the case of *gymnazia* students, towards university entrance. But since 1989, uncertainties have replaced certainties, and experienced teachers such as those in this group are more keenly aware of this than most.

6.5. Focus Group 4: Requalifying Teachers from Eastern Slovakia

Because of last-minute absences, the final focus group consisted of only three teachers, two of them (B. and A.) secondary school teachers and one (E.) based mainly in a basic school. All were true requalifiers, having first been trained to teach in one subject, and then forced through circumstances to re-train as English teachers. Two participants had undergone a full requalification programme at Presov University while the third (E.) had received an accreditation certificate (see Ch.4, p.115) from the local *Metodicke Centrum.* I acted as moderator of the interview with Zuzana Strakova (Presov University) assisting. The question schedule used was similar to that of the three previous groups, but with some questions added that were relevant only to requalifying teachers.

It is important to note that because of poor sound quality in some parts of the recording, this final focus group interview was *not* transcribed. Thus, except for a few verbatim remembered quotations, the selected opinions have all been collected from some retrospective notes on the interview compiled by the two moderators. These have not been included in the appendices to be placed alongside the complete transcripts of the other interviews: there is therefore no appendix relating to this interview.

Q: What are their feelings concerning their job?

B: thinks that foreign language teachers are appreciated more by schools as they are in such short supply: but she questions whether she is really appreciated by her school director, who doesn't release her as often as he could for her professional development. She said that her main problem is lack of belief in her own spoken and written ability in English.

A. feels that she would enjoy her job more if the schools showed their appreciation by paying adequate salaries..... She is confident about her English, but still thinks that keeping her standard of English up to the right level is problematic.

E. now finds being an English teacher less difficult than when she started just after 1989 (having been a teacher of maths and physics), but still has problems with some of the materials.

Many requalifying teachers became teachers of English after 1989 only because they had no other choice, and in response to pressure from school directors. This small group of teachers demonstrates the range of different subjects (apart from Russian) which some requalifiers taught before 1989. In their case it includes music, history, German and science subjects. It is easy to imagine that, initially, all three must have had very mixed feelings about losing their specialist area and (in the case of B. and A.) resuming university studies. An added problem was that immediately after 1989, university departments were not really prepared for teaching a very different kind of student with the specific needs of the requalifying teacher. As a result the requalifying programmes often fell short of what was required.

Having completed the requalification process, these teachers now seem to express concerns which are shared by other teachers in other focus groups: these include a perceived lack of respect for their status as teachers, heavy workloads, poor salaries and a lack of confidence in their English language abilities.

Q: What type of coursebook materials do they prefer to use?
Do they encounter any specific problems in using these materials?

B. is generally happy with "Headway" and other imported materials. The only real problem (also mentioned by A.) is in constantly having to supply photocopied materials to students (see also focus group notes, p.161). Much of this supplementary material contains grammar exercises to help students prepare for exams. Another associated problem is the fact that they have only 3 hours a week to teach in two diametrically opposed ways, using the more communicative coursebook materials to improve listening and speaking skills, and then providing 'more traditional' exam practice material for grammar and vocabulary.

A. believes that all the materials published after "Strategies" are very similar in content and approach, and are similarly useful. Their biggest problem is perceived to be their inability to deal with grammar teaching in depth: they tend to provide a few examples of target structures, but don't really explain the grammar. As a result teachers need to find extra material to prepare students to have sufficient grammatical knowledge to deal with entrance exams to universities, and, to a lesser extent, the maturita. To supplement the grammar component of her courses A. uses books such as "Anglicka mluvnice" by Karol Hais . Such traditional Slovak/Czech books for accuracy combined with communicative foreign textbooks for fluency, give, she feels, a good balance to her teaching.

E. appreciates the fact that "Project English" is distributed free of charge by the school and says it is a great improvement on "Tandlichova's book". But her own preference for Grades 1-4, "Chatterbox", has to be paid for by the pupils and is expensive. As a result not all children buy the book causing problems for the teacher.

Once again, the concerns of these teachers reflect those of the participants of other focus groups. A's remarks concerning the grammar syllabus of books produced after the "Strategies" series, show that she has identified the same problems and applied similar solutions to those discussed by other experienced teachers in focus group 3. But, in some ways, the difficulties faced by these teachers are even greater: since they do not work in an 'experimental' *gymnazium* (see journal notes p.424), specializing in the teaching of foreign languages, the time allotted for English teaching is greatly reduced. B's three hours. for example, seem extremely inadequate for her students and for herself. The requirement to "teach in two diametrically opposed ways" with so little time available puts great pressure on the teacher, and makes it even more difficult to find the time to adapt unsuitable materials.

Q: What are the main changes in ELT taking place? How do they feel about them? What support do they receive in their work? Is it adequate for their needs?

B. feels that in general things have got better since 1989 but that the job has become much more complex. An important factor is the freedom to travel to English-speaking countries, but since the students are able to do this as well, it is quite difficult to stay one step ahead of them. She feels that support from native speakers is very important for students and for Slovak teachers, and argues that native speaker teachers seem to communicate with students on a slightly different level from their Slovak counterparts.

E. says that her own teaching has changed to accommodate the new approach of books such as "Project English", but it has been a relatively easy process because of the enthusiasm of the students for new books. She thinks that changes in approach have meant more work for teachers.

A. argues that a good teacher always stays ahead of her students, no matter how much time they spend in the USA or the UK: "They may be fluent, but we have the knowledge of the language". She feels less constrained by a rigid syllabus now than pre-1989. "Before 1989 you had to do what you were told". Now there is an element of choice in materials selection.

Much of the discussion concerning the effects of educational change recall comments made by teachers in other focus groups, the exception being the consideration of the role of native speakers, whether as secondary school teaching colleagues or British Council-appointed teacher trainers and lecturers. Both B. and E. feel that native speaker teachers have a slightly different function in schools, with E. citing a supposed ability to "break down barriers" between teachers and students as being of importance. The presence of native speaker teachers is certainly one great change which has taken place since 1989, with an increasing number being employed by *gymnazia*, even outside the larger cities. Before 1989, native speakers were mainly specialists in literature confined to the prestigious Philosophical faculties of the major universities.

The presence of native speakers in schools and the increasing opportunities for students to converse with them and to go abroad to English-speaking countries is seen more as a potential benefit than as a threat by this particular group of teachers. A's attitude that the teacher will still be respected due to her in-depth knowledge of the language can act as an encouragement to less confident teachers, who may worry about the consequences of making isolated mistakes in front of increasingly sophisticated students . These teachers seem very positive about the future and the changes and challenges which they expect it to bring, relying on the enthusiasm of their students and their own sense of liberation from a rigid teaching syllabus to help them succeed.

6.6. Summary

The focus group interviews reported in this chapter (transcribed in Appendices J-L) present the perspectives of four very different groups of Slovak state school teachers on the process of educational change. However, what is immediately apparent is the level of agreement achieved between all of the groups in terms of motivation for change: none of the participants seemed to want to turn back the clock and return to the certainty of the kind of closely prescribed national syllabus, which was the norm under communism. The teachers also appeared to welcome change and the new opportunities available to them since 1989 in a very positive way - not just as a reaction against educational practices associated in their minds with a discredited communist political regime.

However, from this point onwards opinions diverge with older, more experienced teachers wishing to build on local educational traditions (which English language teaching often shares with other subject areas) rather than discarding them totally, while younger, less experienced teachers, who have mostly experienced traditional educational practice as learners rather than teachers, seem more prepared to accept imported materials, methods and approaches without subjecting them to close critical appraisal.

In Focus Group 1 the basic school teachers who were interviewed had different levels of English language teaching experience ranging from a minimum of three years to more than seven. All of the participants had some criticisms to make of imported coursebook materials and their underlying methodology; all of them also wished to express their frustration (and sometimes demotivation) in coming to terms with changes in the teacher-student relationship, and the loss of status which the teaching profession in Slovakia, in their view, is currently experiencing.

In contrast, the less experienced Focus Group 2 teachers at the Dolny Kubin gymnazium, while expressing pessimism with regard to their working conditions, tended to be much more accepting of all-inclusive imported coursebook packages, regarding coursebook

teachers' guides as the most reliable means of support for all of their lesson planning needs. To some extent it appears that they have filled the vacuum created by the disappearance of the old type of syllabus with a new syllabus which is entirely driven by imported coursebook titles chosen by their school.

Focus Group 3 teachers from the Presov gymnazium, with their many years of teaching experience, showed the greatest readiness to subject imported materials and methods to critical appraisal. At the same time they demonstrated a series of strategies for combining elements of both traditional practice with its emphasis on the teaching of grammar and an imported approach emphasizing the development of communicative skills. Every member of this group lamented the change in status that teachers of all subjects have experienced since 1989; the greatest challenge for them appears to be to succeed in retaining the respect of their pupils and their parents in a new society which, in their view, values money more than education.

Finally, the teachers in Focus Group 4, who had all requalified after teaching other subjects before 1989, felt that enthusiasm for the introduction of a wider range of materials and methods should be tempered by an awareness of the growing complexity of a language teacher's work. They also questioned the ability of 'communicative' materials to value language knowledge sufficiently, arguing that their tendency to over-emphasize fluency activities rather than accuracy means much work for the teacher, who is obliged to provide supplementary material to ensure that students receive a more balanced study programme.

CHAPTER 7: THE CASE STUDY REPORT - CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

7.1. Introduction

This chapter focusses on classroom observations (see Chapter 3.7) in two designated schools in 1997 and early 1998, which were intended to complement and support the data obtained from focus groups. The idea was that by documenting the experiences of teachers and their classes, it would be possible to examine some of the practical implications of change in greater depth, comparing teacher's opinions as expressed in focus groups and informal interviews with how these are translated into classroom practice. The data from observations would also, it was hoped, have the effect of supporting and strengthening the focus group data. In general, it will be seen that this has proved to be the case.

There were potential problems in setting up class observation schedules. It was always intended that participation in the observation programme would be entirely voluntary. To provide some sort of incentive for allowing an outsider into the classroom, I offered to teach classes during each school visit week with the teachers able, in their turn, to act as observers for these lessons. A further suggested option was to team-teach some classes (which in fact happened on three occasions); in addition there were opportunities for joint planning of lessons taught either by myself or the class teacher. In both of the schools the teachers seemed to regard this as a fair exchange and, particularly in the Presov gymnazium, took every opportunity to play the role of observers themselves. In the short time available a very positive working relationship was established between myself and teachers who volunteered to participate in observations and team-teaching. This was an essential aspect of the data collection process: no other stage of the research project was as dependent as this one on such close collaboration between individuals.

For observation purposes, the instrument described in section 3.7.(see also Appendix C) served as a guide for each class visit with notes taken under the headings of "class profile", "lesson aims", "materials", "pre-lesson comments", "lesson activities", and "post-lesson comments"

The observation notes for each class visit were included as part of a *school visit journal* (see Appendices M & N) kept for each school. Although a journal was not included in the original design for data collection (as detailed in Chapter 3), it quickly became clear that this would be an extremely useful way of keeping a record of significant events that took place outside classes being observed or the opinions of teachers expressed in informal interviews. It also provided an opportunity for some immediate reflection on the whole week's experience once the busy schedule of observations, interviews and teaching was finished. The lesson observation notes of their own accord became a part of the journal, since thoughts on a particular lesson were sometimes added after the event or came to mind when another lesson was being observed. For this reason, in the rest of this chapter, a selection of both lesson observation notes *and* extracts from journal notes are presented as relevant data.

In the journal some reference is also made to documentary data which serves to clarify some of the focus group participants' (Ch.6) and interviewees' comments (Ch.5), especially when these refer to syllabus or test specifications. During the visit to the Presov school in particular, copies of much official documentation approved by Ministry of Education sources (usually in Slovak) was handed over to the researcher. An example of such material translated into English can be found in Appendix O.

Finally, in what follows, references to my own teaching have mostly been edited out. This achieves the effect of emphasizing lesson observations of Slovak teachers (the main aim of the school visits), rather than confusing the reader by including notes on lessons in which there was no Slovak teacher. Lessons which were team-taught by myself and a

Slovak colleague have also been edited out since no observation notes were taken.

The remaining two sections of this chapter consist of a selection of lesson observation and journal notes taken from each school visit, in each case accompanied by further commentary . It should be noted that:-

(i) Lesson notes were made before, during and immediately after each observed lesson. They have not been altered subsequently, and represent the observer's immediate reaction to events which took place.
(ii) Post-lesson comments which were recorded at the time have been omitted from the extracts reproduced in this chapter. They can, however, be found in Appendices M & N.
(iii) Photocopies of the materials on which each lesson was based can also be found in Appendices M & N.
(iv) Parentheses are used in the lesson notes to separate evaluative comments made at the time from descriptive text. Such comments have also been italicized in the extracts included in this chapter (but not in the original lesson notes themselves)..
(vi) The remaining journal entries and class observation notes not included in these sections can be found in Appendices M & N.

7.2. School visit to Dolny Kubin gymnazium (18.11.97 - 22.11.97)

The first school to be visited was the *gymnazium* in Dolny Kubin, a small town of about 20,000 inhabitants, situated in the Orava region of northern Slovakia. Its student population comes from the town itself and also nearby villages in what is regarded as one of the poorer regions of the country. However, the town itself is not far from several larger towns such as Ruzomberok, Liptovsky Mikulas and Banska Bystrica, and for this reason might be expected to attract teachers from more urban centres than Dolny Kubin itself. The English department, headed by Jozef Medvecky, consisted of 6 Slovak teachers and one American Peace Corps volunteer. Not all of the teachers were able to

take part in either the focus group interview or classroom observations (see notes p.399).

Although the visit to the school began on Tuesday 18th of November 1997 , only a selection of classroom observation notes and journal entries are discussed in this section, beginning with observation notes for Thursday November 20th. (For earlier journal entries and notes, see Appendices M & N). The notes included here focus exclusively on two teachers, A. and T.

Thursday November 20th: Observation Notes Lesson 2 (8.25-9.10) Teacher: A.

Class Profile:	Prima, 11 yrs., 6 girls/9 boys, Beginners
Lesson aims:	Practice of vocabulary for rooms in the house.
Materials:	*Project English 1* (workbook & student book)
Pre-lesson: comments	A. plans to check homework before starting the main part of the lesson. Wants to introduce the topic via a listening task (suggested in the book). Finds the materials problematic since everything has to be explained in Slovak. Needs more materials to supplement, especially pictures, but no time free. Sometimes test material needed as well. Doesn't enjoy teaching this level and feels she has been stuck with it because she is low down in the school hierarchy.
Activities:	1. Children asked me lots of questions with the teacher prompting in Slovak. I asked them a few. 2. Workbook exercise: describing houses. No Slovak in the book means that A. is constantly having to explain and translate. But this is done quickly. 3. Textbook p.19. Necessary to organize groups (in Slovak).Children listen to recorded sounds on tape and have to work together to find out which rooms in a house they refer to. Although this is a fun activity, a lot of Slovak explanation is needed to make them understand the task. Even then children need to ask questions about what to do. Children tend to give one-word answers. *(They could perhaps repeat the answers for some pronunciation practice)*. The second time round A. plays the sounds to elicit longer responses such as "She's in the bedroom" Children confuse "bedroom" and "bathroom". *(A good idea to focus on pronunciation here - does the book do this?)* 4. Textbook p.19: looking at advertisements for accommodation. A. asks children what they know about such advertisements in Slovak. Children read the advertisements and try to understand abbreviations such as "kn" for "kitchen". *(Is this a useful exercise*

for them?) They write out abbreviations in full, which is useful in that they get to spell all the names of the rooms in full. A. then checks the answers round the class asking individuals to write on the board. Children had difficulty writing the abbreviations correctly, as I would. *(I think there's no point in this: which spellings will they remember, I wonder?)* Children then discuss correct/incorrect spellings and help each other to spell.

5. Still with the advertisements, children have to say what rooms each house has got eg. 2 bedrooms, bathroom. *(It would be nice to have some supplementary games to use here, perhaps involving pictures of the rooms.)*

6. Homework : workbook sentences to answer eg "Do you live in a house or a flat?"

7. A long discussion in Slovak which I didn't understand, involving just about everyone. It turned out that they are preparing house plans which they can talk about in class, and that the discussion was because children were complaining that they didn't know how to do the plan of a house! They also asked for new words such as "hall". But some children were leaving blanks on their plans because they corresponded to words which they did not know. This task comes from the book. *(But a nice personalized task I thought and probably worth all the hassle!)*

(Extract taken from Appendix M, p.401-2)

Before the lesson the teacher, A., made it very clear that she finds teaching young children from this age group (11-12) problematic, and does not feel that she has been really trained to deal with the kind of materials which they need. A's training was undergone in the Philosophical Faculty of the University of Presov, where trainees are specifically prepared to teach an older 'secondary level' age group. The problem is that, with the current tendency for 4-year *gymnazia* to revert to the 8-year model popular before 1945 (see 1996 OECD report p.37 for details of this process in the Czech Republic), many teachers are suddenly finding themselves unexpectedly having to teach such younger groups, who formerly would have studied at a basic school rather than at a *gymnazium*.

Some of the consequences of teaching younger learners (according to A.) include the need to provide more explanations in Slovak and the need to produce more stimulating materials to supplement the coursebook. However, because of her heavy teaching load, she has little time for materials preparation. A. feels that she has been given these levels

because she is low down in the school hierarchy, and would much prefer not to have to teach them (see journal notes, p.401-2, for a more detailed discussion of this).

During this particular lesson her concerns proved to be accurate. No Slovak in the imported coursebook meant that she was constantly having to explain and translate. One activity in which it was necessary to organize groups illustrates this difficulty (see step 3 above). The one-word answers which the students produced hardly warranted the time spent on so much explanation, especially when this had to be in Slovak to enable them to understand what was required.

In the activities looking at advertisements for accommodation (see steps 4 and 5), A. had further problems with the materials, but evidently did not feel justified in omitting anything or able (probably due to lack of time) to make an attempt at adapting them. Later in the lesson a long discussion (step 7) came about because the students did not really understand how to produce the plan of a house even in Slovak.

These examples from the lesson illustrated very clearly the kind of problems which A. faces as an inexperienced teacher using unfamiliar imported materials. Her feeling is that the first time she teaches from an unfamiliar book she cannot afford to omit activities, or to deviate from the suggested procedures in the teacher's book. In the absence of other means of support she is therefore completely dependent on the guidance offered by the teacher's book; if this proves to be deficient or not relevant to the needs of her students, she feels that there is little that she can do. A case in point would be the question of pronunciation practice material (mentioned in the post-lesson notes, p.402); if there is no mention of pronunciation in the suggested lesson procedures, then pronunciation practice will not figure as part of her lesson.

Thursday November 20th: Observation Notes Lesson 3 (10.20 - 11.05) Teacher: A

Class Profile: 3B, 16 yrs., 10 girls/2 boys, Pre-Intermediate/Lower Intermediate

Lesson aims: Practice of present perfect tense.

Materials: Headway Pre-Intermediate p.103

Pre-lesson: A. plans to elicit the grammar structure by means of pictures and a game.
The game is adapted from one suggested in the Teachers' Book.
A. has decided to add her own suggestions to experiment a little.

Activities: 1. Game: What has changed in the classroom? *(A very large room, by the way).*
Four people go out while the others plan some changes in the room. When the four come in they are supposed to say what has changed. However, it is easy to do this avoiding the target structure, eg "windows are open" rather than the more complex "someone has opened the window". They only managed the 'correct' structure after being prompted. *(It's the Teacher Book suggestions that make this game not work well. Would it be better for those coming in to ask questions such as "Has someone ..... ?")*

2. Using pictures in the coursebook sts. say what has just happened eg "The cars have had an accident". Only a bit of translation was necessary to help them here.
(This activity and the game were raced through very quickly. I wonder if all the students have understood. Do they have any problems?)

3. Making wedding plans: what have they done/haven't they done.
A useful controlled practice exercise.

4. Grammar exercise. They should try to match the two halves of sentences.
They are supposed to match the ones which are grammatically correct, but
A. had the bright idea of asking them to make the silliest combinations as well.
(A nice creative touch, bringing some fun to a rather dull task!)

5. Grammar exercise. Sentence completion and checking.
The exercise checking followed the pattern of the previous ones: individual sts. provide the answer and the teacher moves on. *(Do the others understand?)*

6. Grammatical explanation: one student asked to read it out from the book.
The explanation is in English. There are examples then to translate into Slovak.
(Is the translation exercise in the book?)

7. Homework: translation of sentences.

8. Final activity to fill in a few minutes. Students have to walk round the class and find the strangest thing that has happened to anyone. All the students looked totally blank and when asked to do the task didn't really know what was expected.
By the time the teacher had explained what to do, the class time was up.
(I was completely taken aback by this activity introducing slightly different grammar, "Have you ever ....?". An interesting idea for an activity, but too complex I think for the last two or three minutes of a lesson.)

(Extract taken from Appendix M, p.403-4)

This lesson was taught by A. with an age group which she prefers. Her lesson plan was very closely modelled on suggestions made in the "Headway" teacher's book; the activity at the end of the lesson was added on the spur of the moment, and was not part of the original plan.

The game described in step 1 did not really work according to the teacher's book suggestions. The students, annoyingly for the teacher, succeeded in by-passing the required structure except when they were pointedly instructed to use it, preferring to describe a change in the classroom as "the windows are open" rather than saying "someone has opened the windows". A. felt obliged to correct what were perfectly appropriate answers in order to elicit the target structure, but the students seemed to understand that their answers were only invalidated because the teacher wanted something specific. They seemed to regard this procedure as perfectly acceptable. Coursebook pictures were more successful at combining appropriate answers with the teacher's lesson aims.

Although unwilling to experiment with the procedures for the game, A. showed more confidence in her own creative abilities in the rest of the lesson, for example when encouraging students to produce the most surreal combinations in a sentence-matching exercise, as well as the most meaningful. Most unexpectedly, she also decided to introduce her own impromptu 'round-the-class' activity to fill in the final few minutes.

What happened in this final activity disappointed A. after she had felt confident enough to forgo suggested activities in the teacher's book in favour of her own. Although the students tried to follow her instructions and obviously respect her abilities as a teacher, they became more and more confused and there was no time left at the end to salvage the situation; the lesson ended in confusion. To prevent this kind of occurrence from taking place it is easy to work out the 'safe' alternative - keep to the tried-and-tested teacher

book activities. It would be unfortunate if A. were always to reach this kind of conclusion, since it would certainly have negative consequences for her professional development. From watching both of the classes taught by A., it is apparent how dependent busy teachers now are on textbooks for everything, following the suggested lesson structure faithfully and doing every exercise. The implication is that by doing so, they have become less creative, and, it could be argued, less likely to master essential lesson planning and teaching skills which they will need in their future careers.

Friday November 21st: informal interview with T.

Dt: What's your background in teaching? How many years have you been teaching?
T: Background? This is my third year.

Dt: Right. I see. Always in this school?
T: Uh huh.

Dt: And have you always taught with this type of book?
T: With "Headways" and "Grapevines", that's all. These two types ... they are completely different types. But only these two.

Dt: And every year is it a new book you've got to get used to?
T: In those two or three years it's every year a new book *(laughs)*. Because I didn't know them before. So ...

Dt: Who chooses the book? Why are some classes using "New Headway"? Why are some using ...
T: Some of them only reached the *(inaudible)* ..... because we heard about "New Headway's" coming from the publisher and that class decided to use the new "Headway". We just told the classes in the 2nd or 3rd year ..... no, at the end of the 2nd year, you can choose either the old "Headway" or the new one.

Dt: So students get to choose?
T: Uh huh. And some students had the old "Headway" so they chose those ones, and some of them decided for this ...

Dt: Is there a syllabus apart from the book? Or is the book the syllabus?
T: No. The syllabus for each class is based on the book.

Dt: So when you change the book, you change the syllabus?
T: Uh huh. It's more or less the same for one level. You just sometimes change the topics or .....there are maybe more activities to do with this book than the old "'Headway". It's better for information this one and ... there are lots of things to do. They have their workbooks too. They are reading some exercises ...

Dt: There's masses of material ..
T: Masses of material. You don't know which you can skip and which you can't ... it's difficult to make a decision.

Dt: So do you do everything, or do you skip things?
T: No, not everything. First I did everything in this book . .. the first lessons, first units. But then I could see that some of the activities were useless .... they didn't work or didn't have any effect. So if I'm thinking more about every unit....what I could miss out and what I should do in what way ..... and as for workbooks I just ask them to do them on their own and then return about problems or more difficult exercises.

Dt: Would you rather have a book with all the material or a much simpler book which you could adapt and make materials for?

T: I think to have a simpler book .... I don't know. It's better to have more and make decisions.

(Extract taken from Appendix M, p.404-7)

This interview began spontaneously when T. and I were talking about a class which I had taught the day before. T. commented on the only two imported coursebook series she has used, "Headway/New Headway" (old and new versions of the same title), and "Grapevine". In each year of her teaching she has had to get used to teaching at least one new book from these series.

What comes across clearly from this interview is the extent to which the teaching syllabus is always based on the book rather than vice versa. This means that, like A., T. is virtually obliged to do every activity and follow every suggestion in the teacher's book until she has become more familiar with the coursebook content. Every time the book is changed, this process is repeated. This means that every year in her teaching career so far, T. has been using some of her main teaching materials in a completely mechanical way, never changing the order of activities, rarely omitting or adding activities, and, like A., making little use of her creative talents. In this way, it could be argued that both teacher and pupils are no better off than in the days of prescribed teaching-plans under communism. In some respects they might even be worse off due to the lack of continuity which they experience when materials are constantly changing.

Later in the same interview (see Appendix M, p.404-7), T. pointed out that because there were almost no pronunciation activities in the "Headway" teacher book lesson plans, she rarely provides her students with pronunciation, stress or intonation practice, at least not the first time she uses a new title (see also A's comments on pronunciation, p.402). The explanation for this is alarming: the series has separate pronunciation practice books which the school cannot afford and which pupils are unwilling to buy. Thus a marketing decision by a publisher to promote "Headway" as a multi-component rather than a completely integrated package has indirectly led to a teaching syllabus in many Slovak schools where an important element of language learning is neglected.

Friday 21st November: Observation Notes Lesson 4 (9.20 - 10.05) Teacher: T.

Class Profile: 4C, 17 yrs, 5 boys 9 girls, Intermediate

Lesson aims: Reflecting on their progress in English.

Materials: "Recipes for Tired Teachers" game (p.11-12)

Pre-lesson: T. said before the lesson that she felt she had reached a point with this group where she needed to make them start thinking seriously about their lack of progress in English after 8 years of study. The lesson is very much an experiment,which may or may not work.

Activities: 1. Sts asked me questions about life in Britain for a few minutes.

2. Game about language learning leading to serious discussion.
They have to assume the role of a person learning a language and say what that person thinks eg "I believe most teachers talk too much and dominate the lesson". One person has to act as a teacher and control the discussion. A very bright boy, V., volunteered, and asked general questions such as "What do you think about English classes?".

(In this discussion they are asked to assume the opinions of different characters who aren't themselves: would it be better to let them have their own opinions, perhaps responding to a menu of statements? However, in spite of this, some good observations, eg on whether we can survive without grammar, were made. As the activity goes on it begins to make more sense, but I still wonder if important points will be lost).

3. T. asks them to forget about the opinions expressed on the pieces of paper and asks what their real opinions are concerning foreign language learning. She asks: "Do you agree with the opinions already expressed in the class?" *(A problem of remembering here).*

> 4. Analysis of the discussion activity. T. thinks that the coursebook is not helping them because this is clear from test results. Some ideas/solutions from students *(Should they be in Slovak?)* are:- More language lessons, visiting the countries where the language is spoken, using the language as much as possible, more practice, using the coursebook rather than not using it. T. adds the need for them to be active learners.
>
> (Extract taken from Appendix M, p.408)

T. said before this lesson that she felt she had reached a point with this group where she needed to make them start thinking seriously about their lack of progress in English after 8 years of study. The lesson was very much a one-off experiment designed to help them with this, and seen as being outside the normal language teaching syllabus.

Although the first part of the discussion, (where the students were forced to adopt and defend opinions which they might or might not sympathize with outside the roleplay), proved frustrating, the second part did allow some interesting points of view to emerge. The students made several practical suggestions, (more language lessons, visiting the countries where the language is spoken, using the language as much as possible, more practice with the "Headway" coursebook), without really being encouraged to go a stage further and explain how these might be achieved. T. seemed to want to get across her own point of view as well as listening to theirs, arguing that the coursebook perhaps was not helping to prepare for exams , and that their learning style was too passive.

The fact that T. was prepared to conduct what was essentially a feedback lesson with an observer present seems very courageous, since, unlike regular lessons following 'suggestions' in the coursebook teacher's book, this lesson was highly unpredictable in terms of its outcomes. It is tempting to interpret it as a cry for extra support by a teacher who is really trying her best, but feels dissatisfied with the results of her own teaching as measured by the performance of her students. Anyone observing this lesson would also be struck by the fact that gaining feedback from students does not seem to be a recognized element in coursebook packages such as "Headway" or any of its rivals. If

imported coursebook materials are to be made relevant to the different teaching and learning contexts in which they appear, there is a strong argument for building in some ideas for helping teachers to evaluate their own degree of success, as well as that of their students.

The journal entries which provide summarizing comments on T. and A. (see Appendix M, p.410-11) make it clear that both are dedicated teachers with great potential to become highly successful. But both are experiencing frustration due to lack of support in coping with a seemingly endless stream of new materials, which they initially welcome, but which can prove difficult to adapt to the needs of their students. Because support is lacking within the educational system, in the form of workshops, further training courses or even systematic help and advice from more experienced colleagues, they are both forced to rely on the coursebook teacher's book for guidance. This, however, can be deficient in many respects, not having been designed specifically for the Slovak context. Such problems are also compounded by the pressure on these teachers to work very heavy timetables including a wide range of ages and abilities.

The journal notes (see Appendix M, p.411) also reveal that A. is sufficiently disillusioned with her current situation in the school hierarchy to think about leaving the teaching profession. With her university qualification and fluency in written and spoken English there are at present many better-paid career opportunities beckoning. Nevertheless, she is still planning to succeed in her chosen profession and seems to have worked out a plan in which she wants to master the management aspects of the job first; meanwhile the content of her lessons will continue to be decided by the coursebook teacher's book. In the journal notes she emphasizes that even her initial training didn't teach her "how to teach .... teaching skills" but taught methodology as a knowledge-based subject (see Appendix M, p.410). This initial lack of support in the practicalities of day-to-day teaching (see also Chapter 1, p.35) has continued in this, her first teaching job. T., although now in her third year of teaching, has a similar story to tell.

In the Dolny Kubin gymnazium, although there are very experienced teachers of English (for example J. and E., who participated in the focus group), circumstances did not allow the observer to attend any of their lessons. It would have been highly instructive to compare their experiences of coping with educational change with those of their younger colleagues. For such a comparison it is necessary, within the context of this research project, to look at the situation of some highly-experienced teachers in another *gymnazium* in another region of the country.

7.3. School visit to Raymana Gymnazium, Presov (23.03.98 - 27.03.98)

The second school to be visited was the *Raymana Gymnazium* in Presov, which, with 90,000 inhabitants, is the third largest town in the country. It is also situated only 30 kilometres from Kosice (250,000 inhabitants), the major urban centre in the East Slovak region. The school attracts students who mostly come from an urban environment, while many of its teachers received their training in one of several university faculties offering teacher training in the two towns. The English Department consists of five full-time teachers, and one part-time teacher. Four of the full-time teachers, G. (the Head of Department), M., J. and T. agreed to take part in the observation and focus group schedule, with the other two teachers declining the invitation. The four teachers are all highly experienced (see focus group notes, p.169), and it is possibly for this reason that the school was designated an *experimental gymnazium* for the teaching of foreign languages (see below).

Monday 23rd March 1998: informal interview with G.
Below are journal notes taken from an informal interview with G., with contributions from T.:

THE SCHOOL
One of not very many experimental gymnazia in Slovakia (see syllabus for experimental schools). Students have only 4 compulsory subjects: Slovak, English, German or French and PE in 3x45 minute lessons a week. 12 compulsory lessons in total. There are also 18 optional lessons giving a total of 30.

OPTIONAL LESSONS

They can choose 3 subjects with 4 lessons (3x4=12), also 3 subjects with 2 lessons (3x2=6).
The most motivated English sts choose the 4 lesson option and therefore have 3 compulsory and 4 optional, making a total of 7 lessons weekly. It's also possible of course to have 5 (3+2) or just 3 (3+0) lessons, which is the case for the least motivated pupils of English. In 1997/8 100 students selected English as an option. (G. is proud of this as it represents a high percentage. She later gave me these figures. Total no.sts in 4th grade in 4 classes/8 groups = 132. Of these, 100 chose English, 42 German, 9 French and 40 Maths)

MATURITA

There are 4 subjects to pass. In theory only Slovak is compulsory. But in this school at least, English is a "compulsory optional" rather than "optional" for the exam: sts either need Maths or English or French/German. A mock exam for 1998 has already been held at the school . It was written by a special team and was sponsored by the British Council. Jana Beresova of the Bratislava MC heads the team. The test is only being used in about 100 pilot schools - other schools just have an oral exam, but these schools will have this written exam as well (see copy of exam and maturita oral topics).

G. showed me that last year's test (also produced by the team) was far too long. This year it looks better but sts in the mock exam still complained about the difficulty of phrasal verb grammar exercises in Part 1, and the length of the reading text in Part 2. But in general their reaction was positive.

T. made an interesting point about the oral exam - that under socialism the oral topics were in English. Now because of the 1994 Language Law, they have to be given in Slovak!

TEXTBOOKS

The MofEd recommended their current books (the "Strategies" series) in 1990/1. Because the teachers didn't know any imported books, they followed the recommendation ("Blueprint" was the alternative recommendation) for the no.1 textbook. But since then some teachers have used "Headway" (M.) or "Streetwise" (J.). In addition, most teachers use traditional Czech or Slovak books such as J.Peprnik's "Anglicky jazyk pro filology" for help with grammar. Because grammar is needed not only for maturita, but above all for university entrance exams. Another useful book is "Anglicka mluvnice" by Karol Hais, which was recommended by Presov faculties for the grammar part of the *maturita*. This book is in Czech and Slovak versions. Peprnik is still only in Czech.

Two final points: There are also grammar exercise books written by Peprnik and in regular use. Finally, one teacher has started to use imported supplementary books such as: "First Certificate Masterclass". T. said: "Old ugly textbooks have everything students need for university entrance tests" and "After Strategies no one will pass an entrance test".

REALIA IN TEXTBOOKS

The maturita also contains a cultural component and T. argued that the traditional books gave a better preparation for this with a very standardized view of British or American culture. The cultural topics are prepared for the oral exam with sts learning certain facts and figures by heart.

(Extract taken from Appendix N, p.424-6)

This initial interview with G. provided very useful background information on the school, the language teaching syllabus, the school-leaving *maturita* examination and textbook selection, information which was lacking in the visit to the Dolny Kubin *gymnazium*. The most important input relates to the syllabus (see Appendix O); unlike most secondary schools which have replaced the prescribed pre-1989 syllabi with their own coursebook-driven teaching programme, this school is one of about 10 trying out an experimental syllabus for different foreign languages (English, French, German and Spanish). The latest version of this has been written by a group of experienced teachers/teacher trainers and was approved by the Ministry of Education in January 1997 (see Appendix O for the full text).

The new syllabus gives equal emphasis to language skills and language knowledge and has the *maturita* as its end-point. As a result, the school has a clear view of what needs to be included in the final exam, and has even prepared a graduate profile for two levels of competence, basic and intermediate (see Appendix P). The experimental syllabus team also prepared a written examination for English for all experimental schools (and about 90 others) in 1997 and, through the schools, conducted extensive feedback to help produce a revised version for 1998. This initiative means that, for the first time since 1989, a group of schools will share a common language teaching syllabus and an even larger group will share a common *maturita* exam with a written component as well as an oral component. However, the seemingly intractable problem of marrying the syllabus with the requirements of university examinations (see comments p.386) remains.

While the syllabus has changed in the *Raymana gymnazium*, the main English coursebook, "Strategies", has remained the same since 1990. Since this series was produced in the late 1970s and early 1980s, an initial impression is given that the school is somehow not very 'up-to-date' in its teaching approach. Yet, while it might be argued that the original selection process (involving two imported titles recommended by the Ministry) was flawed, the solution to any problems of incompatibility with student needs

has been to adapt and to supplement, rather than to jettison everything and to start all over again at regular intervals. This has meant, in practice, finding a wide range of newer imported materials for extra communication practice, and at the same time selecting well-established pre-1989 locally-produced materials to make up deficient areas such as the teaching of grammar or the rather standardized version of 'British' and 'American' culture (see journal notes, p.425-6) which is traditionally tested in the oral topics of the *maturita*. In Chapter 8, a case will be presented for encouraging such an approach in other schools as well, since it seems to make very good use of the accumulated knowledge and experience of the teachers involved.

Tuesday 24th March 1998: Observation Notes Lesson 1 (8.00-8.45) Teacher: J.

Class Profile:	Class 2a, 16 yrs., 11 girls/1 boy, Elementary
Lesson aims:	Reporting events
Materials:	Building Strategies U13 ("Mandy is missing")
Pre-lesson: comments	"One of the best units in the book because of the story"

Activities:

1. J. revises the story from the unit with everyone saying a sentence. *(They all seemed to do the chain story very well).*

2. "What happened to Mandy?". Sts are asked individually. There are possible answers in the police reports on p.94. J. teaches "witness"

3. Roleplay: police interrogating witnesses *(But the answers are already given in the book, so no chance to be creative! Perhaps sts should be making new questions? It would also be nice to go beyond the text and really make them think eg "What do you think of the advice given by the sweet shop owner?")* Although it's a mechanical task, sts seem to do it quite happily. Then J. teaches "canal" and asks : "Why do people build canals?" *(This makes them think!).* She also has a map of the UK showing canals.

4. Listening: to an interview with the third witness, Jack. Teacher gives prompts on the whiteboard and sts note down information. *(An improvement on the book where there are no question prompts).* Sts compare answers by shouting them out. *(Do they all understand? The book could give some hints for checking on this)* J. varies by also asking individuals.

5. The story continues with a dialogue between policeman and policewoman. J. uses the picture to introduce this dialogue. Sts are asked to cover the dialogue in the book and just listen *(no task??)*. They easily understood this and could answer most of J's questions.

6. Sts answer questions in the book in pairs to check understanding of the dialogue once more. (One st has a problem - J. explains in Slovak). J. corrects confusion between "slept" and "slipped". She explains "launch" and "climb down" in Slovak. Homework: prepare a story about Mandy and what happened to her.

(Extract taken from Appendix N, p.427-8)

Because she is familiar with the coursebook materials, J. feels able to use them very flexibly. Since this particular unit of the book is popular both with the students and their teacher, she is happy to do most of the suggested activities. However, she still adapts the materials in different ways, eg (1) making listening tasks more focussed , (2) providing extra cultural input, and (3) suggesting that she will make up for lack of grammar practice exercises by using material from another book.

J. has reservations about the selection of topics in some units of imported coursebooks. She feels strongly that students may be embarrassed by being forced to discuss very personal aspects of their lives in the public forum of the classroom. She cites "smoking" as one such topic in a society where adults are very strict in their approach to the lifestyles of their teenage children. The result of forcing a class debate on smoking would, she believes, be suspicion, resentment and an unwillingness to talk on the part of her students. She is clearly much happier with a 'safe' topic such as the disappearance of a little girl in Britain (as is the case in this lesson) to stimulate discussion. Her views are thus in direct opposition to those of Freebairn (see interview p.319-20), who is the co-author of the "Strategies" series.

In a way, both J. and Freebairn are seeking to impose their view of what topics teenagers really want (or don't want) to talk about. While Freebairn assumes that teenagers are always interested in the same topics, and that the topics which interest them are those

which they will also want to talk about, J. believes that there is a great danger of being insensitive in this respect. She gives an example of a younger, less experienced teacher who wanted his students to practise writing invitations in English and thought that it would be interesting to choose a topic that was different - funeral invitations. The teacher had not realized that one of the students had recently lost a parent, and neglected to take into consideration this possibility. Such anecdotal evidence does indeed illustrate the problems of over-personalization of the topics for classroom discussion, as well as the problems which ill-chosen topics can cause for teachers and learners alike. Thus, J. is right to subject the topic list of imported coursebook materials to critical scrutiny.

Tuesday 24th March 1998: Observation Notes Lesson 2 (9.50-10.35) Teacher: G.

Class Profile:	Class 4b, 17-18 yrs., 8 girls/4 boys, Advanced.
Lesson aims:	Talking about health
Materials:	Studying Strategies U8
Pre-lesson:	(No time for pre-lesson discussion.)

Activities:

1. Discussion of who would/wouldn't like to be a doctor. *(A nice warm-up activity for the topic of the unit, which elicited some good comments)*

2. G. turns to oral exercises, p.69 to check some vocabulary to describe the human body. Sts look at picture of a body and name parts (checking homework).

3. Roleplaying a dialogue in pairs: "Is anything wrong with you?" "It's my ...". *(They are given just a few minutes for this).* Another pairwork homework is checked: p.62, the doctor's conversation with Lynne. G. asks if they have the same replies as in the dialogue ...

4. Listening to the dialogue, Ex.2. G. gets sts to predict the answers to the questions, stopping the tape.

5. Lynne goes home and tells her husband about the visit to the doctor.
Aim: reporting what happened at the doctor's, paying attention to sequence of tenses (pairwork again). Two sts act out the dialogue paying attention to the reported speech. G. corrects as they go along.

6. Reading about appendicitis. G. has brought a medical handbook in Slovak to show the sts. *(I'm not really clear why).* She also shows a specialized dictionary for English/Slovak medical terms. Sts must now read the short article and pick out some new words. Individuals explain. *(Do they all understand? The pace is fast).*

7. Listening and completing the doctor's notes. G. has written some key expressions on the board. *(Problems for sts to see the words!)* After the tape has been played, G. asks sts if their pronunciation of the words was correct. Asks Natalia to write translation and phonetic transcription of words using a dictionary, but too late because the bell rings.

(Extract taken from Appendix N, p.429)

G.'s lesson, like J.'s (see comments p.428), raises questions concerning how to approach discussion topics which are part of the syllabus of imported coursebooks. In this case, the topic of health is dealt with in various ways: activities involve naming parts of the body, roleplaying a doctor-patient conversation, reading a rather technical article on appendicitis, and completing some notes made by a doctor. G. argues that the way the topic and the various activities are presented in the book requires a certain level of "creativity" on the part of the students. By this, she seems to mean that they need to create certain conditions which will make the different tasks more accessible - not just on their own, of course, but with help and guidance from their teacher. She singles out a dialogue activity in which the students have to complete a skeleton structure with appropriate language as being particularly unhelpful (see Appendix N, p.429). Here the problem is one of language difficulty. But she could argue equally that discussing specialized medical topics such as appendicitis also presents a problem in terms of student motivation, and that help will be required, either from the materials themselves or from the teacher, to enable the students to gain access to a topic which they may well find both uninteresting and difficult.

G. confessed in informal discussion before and after the lesson that she finds it very hard to make a topic interesting when it is dealt with in a rather unimaginative way (in her opinion) by the materials which she has available. At the same time, the topic is of sufficient importance for her to decide not to omit it altogether (it may well appear as a topic for discussion in the *maturita*). Her solution, as demonstrated in this particular lesson, is to try to transfer the content of the lesson as close to home as possible. In this

she was at least partly successful: for example the initial discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of a medical career in Slovakia provoked interest among *all* the students. In contrast, the introduction of technical terms from a Slovak-English medical dictionary had a mixed reaction, being useful only to those who were genuinely interested in the topic.

Wednesday 25th March 1998: Observation Notes Lesson 5 (12.30-13.15) Teacher: M.

Class Profile:	Class 2c, 16 yrs., 11 girls/10 boys, Mixed level
Lesson aims:	Talking about holidays.
Materials:	Building Strategies U9, p.70
Pre-lesson: comments	This group is very mixed in level. They have all been asked to do some reading homework (p.70 "Letters to the Editor"). An extra homework was to describe some pictures of the weather.

Activities:

1. Sts give their best wishes to a boy for his name day. One girl is asked to stand up and do this on behalf of the rest of the class.

2. Homework describing pictures is checked. M. checks/corrects what is said as individuals read. *(It's not easy for the others to pay attention. There is no real suggestion in the materials concerning how to use these pictures imaginatively).* M. asks: "What is the weather like today?" Individuals reply. Others listen.

3. Letter about party political broadcasts on TV (p.70). This was set for homework and now sts ask M. about difficult words: she in turn checks their understanding and translates some expressions. Book questions were also set: eg "What are the government going to do about day nurseries/student grants etc?" *(The book topic isn't exciting and the array of questions in their inevitable order isn't designed to get students excited).*

M. then asks sts for words from the text or questions that are similar in Slovak and English. They seem to wake up a bit here, contributing "national", "nuclear" etc. M. continues the discussion in Slovak and now they are really awake.
M's conclusion: "There are international terms which are almost the same in any language" *(a useful observation).* This somehow turns into a discussion of politics in Britain with sts being asked about the Prime Minister, political parties etc.

4. Listening activity, p.70. They have to listen to people's holiday plans and fill in a chart. M. turns the chart headings into questions eg "Country/Place" becomes "Where are they going to go?" Sts listen the first time and pick up quite a lot: they are happy to answer questions after one listening. But M. isn't satisfied and plays the tape again. *(When sts do answer, it's always individuals and there's no real way*

of knowing if others have understood or have even bothered to complete the task. A final note: M. has a tendency to supply answers for sts or to finish them off).

5. Writing sentences about the woman in the listening (using "going to").
The same st is asked to read his sentences out loud ... the rest have to listen.

(Extract taken from Appendix N, p.433-4)

The teacher, M., warned before the lesson that this group of students is very mixed in level, and that as a result, only some of them participate. For this lesson they had all been asked to do some homework, exploring the rather culture-specific topic of party political broadcasts on British TV.

In terms of managing the group, which with 21 students of mixed ability was larger than the norm, M. did not appear to use much imagination, relying on questioning techniques which allowed many students to lose concentration; nor did she seem unduly concerned that some students (the weaker ones?) were not actively participating at all. M. ensured that she had tight control over all of the activities making no exceptions - not even for the 'spontaneous' expression of good wishes for one student's name day at the start of the lesson. The atmosphere in class was subdued throughout, with little or no opportunities provided for students to take the initiative. As a result they were passive until the teacher granted them their turn.

On the surface this seemed a rather dull and uninspiring lesson, and yet there was much evidence that the students were learning from it. M.'s comments after the class (see Appendix N, p.434) concerning the importance of 'international' words mentioned in the lesson are thought-provoking: this is an area that monolingual international coursebooks could conceivably attempt to deal with. However, since these are mostly designed without reference to any language other than English, it perhaps does not occur to them to think in terms of vocabulary which will be familiar to speakers of many other

languages apart from English. As M. implies, these items are often the easiest to learn, and could perhaps serve as a means of motivating students coping with a difficult text.

M's views concerning topic selection are also informative: she feels very strongly that a teacher should guide the students in this respect and "not just talk about pop groups". Like her colleague, J. (see p.198), she would disagree with the views of the author of the coursebook which she is currently using (see Freebairn's comments, p.319-20). At the very least, M. feels that she has a duty to lead students in the direction of topics which will ultimately be of great help to them when preparing for the *maturita*.

Thursday 26th March 1998: Informal interviews with G. and with T.

7.45: As always, I arrive early. I meet G. in the staff room and she talks to me about supplementing materials and the problem of dull texts in "Strategies" (Studying Strategies, especially, cf the appendicitis text). "Friendship" magazine is the main supplementary resource (cost Sk90): it's usually possible to get 90% of sts subscribing. G.distributes to the sts, as do other teachers. The topics are particularly good for the 'realia' section of the *maturita* (some, not all). Even very general topics such as basic facts on the USA are useful. There are also "Prirucka pre maturantov" books which are very useful for the oral topics - especially for the less advanced sts. Also useful is "The English-speaking countries" - another book of facts. And the school makes use of its American lecturer, K., who I met briefly on Monday. The ratio of K.'s lessons is 1:3 - for every ns lesson there are three lessons by Slovak teachers. A good ratio, I think.

G. also refers to the British coursebooks when preparing for the exam topics (eg travel), giving references from each of the books which have been studied (even going back to early beginner books). What about giving up the old topics and starting new ones? Some teachers will be unwilling to give them up. There are topics that have always been 'recommended' in the syllabus. That's why, unofficially, topics are more or less the same in all schools.

Some universities also have these topics as part of their entrance exams (cf FF Bratislava). G. thinks that sts need to prepare the topics. In spite of the fact that Presov PdF doesn't have an oral component in the entrance exam, the FF does. And even if sts are going to study management in an Economics Faculty, they will have an oral exam in English.

9.45: T. and I began to discuss another problem of 'modern' textbooks - the fact that there is just too much to take in in any unit or on any page. Too many pictures, too many exercises. T. showed me a coursebook from Finland (which she visited a few years ago because the school has a twin there). In this book there is one text to one page, one picture or chart to one page etc. There's also a mini-encyclopedia at the back with basic information on cultural topics mentioned in the book - people, places and events. This whole conversation made me think of the importance of simplicity, in terms of content and in terms of presentation and design.

(Extract taken from Appendix N, p.435-6)

This informal interview with G. began as a continuation of the post-lesson discussion for Observation Lesson 2. G. explained the traditional approach to teaching culture associated with a foreign language (the Slovak term used, "realia", is confusing in an ELT context). For the *maturita* and also for some university entrance examinations, students are expected to know a selection of facts concerning English-speaking countries (including Canada, Australia and New Zealand), to be familiar with summarized biographies of famous people and to have some basic information concerning specific customs and traditions, for example tea-drinking in Britain or Thanksgiving celebrations in the USA. In other words, there is an understanding of specific 'British' and 'American' cultures as standardized bodies of knowledge which can be taught and learnt.

This particular view of culture and the study of culture (see also Chapter 2, p.44) means that the topic syllabi of imported coursebook materials will be found to be deficient, particularly with respect to facts and figures concerning different English-speaking countries. No imported coursebook will give the necessary weight to both 'British' and 'American' culture in the standardized format which is required by the *maturita*. And, as G. points out, even if the *maturita* topics were to change, students would often still require this kind of culture teaching for entrance exam purposes. The only short-term solution is to supplement, by using a mixture of long-established titles which provide specific 'realia' preparation and newer materials, including the locally-produced "Friendship" magazine. In the long-term, it is to be expected (and hoped) that the ever-increasing levels of contact enjoyed by Slovak teachers and ELT specialists with the 'living' culture(s) associated with the English language will have their effect, and that the view of culture and the teaching of culture will be considerably broadened. But for the moment, the problem of incompatible teaching aims and materials remains.

An informal interview with T. focussed on another perceived deficient area of the more recently-produced imported coursebook materials. While most teachers are unwilling to return to typical pre-1989 coursebooks such as Repka's "Anglicky jazyk", in terms of

simplicity of design they are still considered to be superior. This consideration may well explain their continuing popularity in some schools where students generally do not attain high levels of English language competence (see Chapter 4, p.120).

Thursday 26th March 1998: Observation Notes Lesson 6 (12.30-13.15) Teacher: T.

Class Profile:	Class 2c, 16 yrs., 5 girls/7 boys, Elementary
Lesson aims:	Comparisons
Materials:	Building Strategies U12 ("Home again!") "Friendship" magazine
Pre-lesson: comments	T. was mysterious about the aims of the lesson except to say that she would give a regular lesson with an average group, and wouldn't change her planning at all because an observer was present.

Activities:

1. The lesson begins with individual sts being asked to come out to talk in front of the class. A boy is quizzed about homework about St.Patrick (from "Friendship"). Sts ask: "Who was St.Patrick? Where is St.Patrick's Day celebrated?"
(It's interesting to see students testing each other on the homework topic.)
St. now recites a poem which he has learnt off by heart. T. asks the others what grade he should receive. "Excellent" is the reply and it goes in the grade book.
T. asks if anyone else wants to come out but there are no volunteers.
(This tradition of reciting in front of the class is apparently common in classes where the Slovak language is being taught and thus crosses subjects).

2. Warm-up activity. Sts are asked to think about what they associate with HOME. They come to the board and complete a word web with words/expressions like "good food", "parents", "my room", "Presov", "family" etc.
T. asks them : "What do you think of when you come back home?".
She teaches "looking forward to + verb + ing" to help them with their replies.
They then practise the replies using this expression.

3. Unit 12, p. 84. Sts look at the picture of Barbara and Rod while T. asks "What do we know about her?" The same question is asked for Rod.

4. Listening to the dialogue. "First just listen ...." The dialogue is about Rod and Barbara unexpectedly meeting. T. asks: "Do you remember their last meeting?" (He couldn't come to the airport because he was busy. Barbara was angry).
T. asks questions about characters' feelings, getting beyond the surface text.

5. Listen and repeat. Sts listen to each line of dialogue and repeat it.
T. focusses on expressions such as "Forget it" and "Oh, that's alright", getting sts to write these on the board. She also picks out "bigger" (it is now being revealed that the focus of the lesson will be on comparisons). Sts are asked to pick out

other examples such as "noisier", "dirtier", "more beautiful". *(The jump to grammar presentation means that sts really don't have much repetition practice - no focus on pronunciation, stress, intonation etc. This seems to be a general characteristic of teachers using coursebooks with this sort of stylized dialogue).* Sts now ask about some words which they don't understand eg "luggage".

6. Homework set: reading comprehension questions on the dialogue *(no extra instructions or guidance given).*

7. Presentation of comparatives/superlatives: T. focusses on formation of the words eg big/bigger, noisy/noisier. She then asks them to form the superlatives, although this is (deliberately?) not covered in the unit. *(This might normally be considered unsound and confusing, but since they seem to know the forms already, perhaps it's inevitable).*

T. then switches her attention to longer words which take "more/most". Sts are asked to write examples on the board. She then asks: "How do you form the rule?" (still speaking in English rather than in Slovak). The rule: one+ two-syllable words end in -er/-est, otherwise use "more/most". T. then discusses the difference between English/Slovak syllables and talks about dropping -y endings.

Finally, she gives all of these explanations in Slovak to make sure they understood. *(All of this means that a good deal of time is spent on the grammatical forms themselves, and on explaining rules).* T. concludes: "These are the basics". She will give more details later.

8. Sts practise using the structure in sentences such as: "Kosice is bigger than Presov" or "The High Tatras are the highest mountains in Slovakia". Most of the class get to practise in this way.

(Extract taken from Appendix N, p.437-8)

T. had two reservations about being observed in this class: (1) that she had never been observed by a native speaker before and worried about making mistakes in English; (2) because she claimed that this class was only average or even below average. She said that the lesson would be "a regular lesson with an average group", and insisted that she wouldn't change her lesson planning because an observer was present.

The first activity (see step 1 above) was in accordance with a long-established tradition of reciting in front of the class (common in classes teaching the Slovak language and often transferred to English teaching). Students are familiar with presenting the results of their homework in this way and are generally happy to be awarded a grade for this,

which is entered in the teacher's register. However, T. herself has some reservations concerning the effectiveness of this procedure (see focus group notes, p.169).

The main part of the lesson involved the students listening to a dialogue, which was really a vehicle for presenting comparative forms (steps 4 and 5 above). Students repeated lines in the dialogue and T. asked some questions about the characters' feelings, successfully getting beyond the rather bland surface text. She then picked out "bigger" from the text and invited the students to select other examples of comparatives. The jump from comprehension practice to grammar presentation was very rapid and meant that they had little opportunity to make the practice meaningful.

T. then switched to a more deductive approach, presenting the rules for comparative and superlative forms, although the latter were not part of the grammar for this coursebook unit. The explanations were given first in English, then in Slovak. Only after the explanations had been completed was there an opportunity for some guided practice. This approach to teaching new grammar, as well as the sequence of steps which it entails, is so well-established in the teaching of foreign languages in Slovakia that T. and the other teachers in this school consider the almost exclusively inductive approach adopted by virtually all recently-produced imported coursebooks as being seriously deficient. The reports of different focus group interviews in Chapter 6 seem to suggest that this sort of view is shared by many Slovak teachers at all levels, since the treatment of grammar was the single most criticized element in imported materials (see comments pp.158-9, p.171 etc.). Writers such as Newby (1993:61) have also argued that this points towards a regional phenomenon, which has been the direct result of overt grammar teaching in the teaching of the first language. At the same time, according to the same writer, the influence of first-language teaching trends in Britain has resulted in a rejection of teaching grammar rules in second-language teaching.

T's lesson, however, did not insist exclusively on a deductive approach to grammar teaching, as can clearly be seen from step 5 of the lesson notes. Teachers such as T. do not seem to be insisting so much on the adoption of one particular approach, but they do object to the almost total exclusion of what they see as a major option in the teaching of grammar. This dual approach, interestingly, also seems to be consistent with that recommended by linguists of the Prague School, such as Vachek (see Chapter 1, p.19). In effect, T's "regular lesson with an average group", turned out to contain elements of traditional Slovak educational practice successfully mixed with ideas inspired by the methodology of her imported coursebook

7.4. Summary

The lesson observation and journal data included in this chapter provide further evidence of the complexities of educational change faced by Slovak state school teachers. It is also apparent through observing classroom practice that certain teachers are in a much better position to manage such complexities than others. Teachers at the Presov *gymnazium* clearly have several advantages denied to those who were observed in Dolny Kubin. Firstly, the fact that their school has been designated an 'experimental' *gymnazium* enables them to have access to an English language teaching syllabus which goes beyond the language, topic or skills syllabus of any individual imported coursebook title. They are in effect indirectly receiving the support of a team of Slovak educational specialists who have contributed to the experimental syllabus (see Appendix O) and a written *maturita* examination which is directly linked to it. Dolny Kubin teachers, on the other hand, have accepted a situation in which their chosen imported coursebooks drive the teaching syllabus, without being directly connected to a written school-leaving examination or entrance examinations. Their sole means of support in this situation appears to come from the coursebook authors themselves, in the form of teacher book guidelines and suggestions.

A second advantage for the Presov teachers lies in their own experience of pre-1989 teaching using locally-produced coursebook titles. They are able to reflect on the differences between traditional educational practice and the methodological assumptions underlying "Headway", "Streetwise" or "Strategies" from the point of view of a language teacher, and not just from that of a language learner (as is the case with the younger Dolny Kubin teachers). As a result, they appear to be more able to subject imported coursebook materials to rigorous critical appraisal. Finally, they also seem to possess a greater range of potential strategies for adapting new materials to the perceived needs of Slovak learners.

It is hoped that the selection of lesson observation and journal notes made in this chapter have been able to provide an indication of the realities of English language teaching practice in state *gymnazia* in Slovakia in a context of rapid educational change. For further accounts not included in the chapter see Appendices M and N.

CHAPTER 8: ISSUES AND OUTCOMES ARISING FROM THE CASE STUDY

8.1. Creating categories to analyse the data

In Chapters 4-7 different types of data were presented, most of which consisted of qualitative data in the form of interview and focus group transcripts, school visit journal entries and lesson observation notes. In order to draw together all of the data in a process of meaningful analysis it is necessary to reduce the complex mass of detail which has been generated so that it is possible to focus on certain key issues. The means of achieving this in this research project will be through the creation of categories into which the different kinds of data can be made to fit .

Dey (1993:96-111) provides a framework for the creation of such categories in accordance with the following rules:

a. Categories should always relate to research questions, aims or hypotheses.

Research questions, aims and hypotheses are clearly the starting point for data categorization, with each new category looking back to them in some way.

b. Categories must be 'grounded' conceptually and empirically .They should have an internal aspect (meaningful in relation to the data) and an external aspect (meaningful in relation to other categories).

Categories which seem acceptable in theory will not work in practice if they do not fit the data. Each category must therefore be 'grounded' (see Glaser & Strauss 1967, Strauss & Corbin 1990) in relevant material. Data within each category, as well as data in different categories can then be compared.

c. A holistic approach to category development suggests beginning with categories which are based on a general comprehension of the data, proceeding to a more detailed categorization.

Broad categories reflecting important themes or issues can be derived from research aims and from the data itself. A refining process can then follow in which more detailed

subcategories of analysis are created. According to Dey (ibid:104) this approach is more practicable when the analyst already has a good idea of what (s)he is looking for.

d. Developing categories usually involves looking forward towards the overall results as well as looking backwards towards the data.

It is important to consider how different categories are interconnected, and not just concentrate on the relationship between individual categories and the data. A holistic view will not just simply appear from a number of disparate units of analysis, so it is essential when creating categories to look forward as well as backwards.

Dey's rules appear to suggest that there are two principal approaches to forming meaningful data categories. The first is to impose on the collected data "existing theoretical perspectives" or "an established set of issues" (ibid:97), which are very closely linked to research aims, questions or hypotheses. Thus a pre-agreed key issue in this research project such as "teacher support for coping with change" might yield one broad data analysis category, which could be labelled "support" and which could be broken down into subcategories such as "collaborative action", "training and re-training", "ELT project input" or "publisher input".

The second way of forming categories, based on grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967), entails allowing categories or subcategories which are also linked to research aims and questions to emerge of their own accord from the data. This is the kind of approach which is considered the norm in some types of research such as participant observation. The main advantage of adopting it is that preconceptions are not allowed to interfere with or to dominate the process of analysis to an excessive extent.

In this research project the aim will be to attempt to reach a balance between inter-related pre-established categories of analysis based on the research aims and subcategories which will be allowed to emerge from the data itself. In order to achieve this, it is useful at this point to re-state the project's main aims (see also Introduction, p.8):-

1. To examine the ways in which the teaching of English in Slovakia has changed since the 1989 'velvet revolution' and the reasons for such changes.
2. To determine the effects of change principally from the perspective of teachers in state schools in Slovakia, but complemented by the perspectives of educational project planners, textbook writers and teacher trainers.
3. To document the experiences of Slovak teachers concerning strategies for coping with change.
4. To draw conclusions concerning future support and development programmes for teachers.

In the introduction to this research project report (see p.8), some questions relating to these aims were also implied including:

* How have English language teaching materials changed since 1989?
* To what extent have imported English Language Teaching coursebook materials replaced those which are locally produced?
* How have English language teaching methods and practices changed?
* How have the changes in materials affected the ELT syllabus of state schools?
* To what extent have new methods come into conflict with 'traditional' educational practice?
* To what extent is the conflict of ideas culturally or ideologically determined?
* To what extent is the position of the NNS teacher under threat from the NS 'expert'?
* What aspects of 'new' methods and approaches are problematic for the local context?
* To what extent does teaching experience help to alleviate these problems?
* What specific strategies can teachers adopt to make imported materials suit the needs of their students?
* How can (particularly inexperienced) teachers be helped in coping with sudden change?
* In this respect what are the potential roles of in-service teacher trainers, university department pre-service trainers, educational publishers and outside organizations such as the British Council?

And hypotheses were also presented in support of which evidence would be collected using methods detailed in Ch. 3. These were as follows:

1. That the post-1989 social changes in Slovakia have led to demands for educational change particularly in the area of foreign language teaching. It is expected that most teachers and their students will have an underlying, but not necessarily focussed, enthusiasm for educational change and a willingness to try out new ideas.

2. That change often has unplanned and unforeseen effects: these can place teachers in a difficult position since they are expected to be both change recipients & change agents. There is a problem of 'pro-innovation bias' by which teachers feel obliged to change more than they would like. There is also a considerable gap between the views of educational planners and teachers with respect to specific ELT changes.

3. That when educational change crosses the boundaries between contrasting cultural and educational traditions, the result can be both a conflict of interests and of different ideologies. Two major contexts for cross-cultural educational change and potential areas of conflict are (a) the importation of EFL coursebooks, and (b) UK-funded ELT projects.

4. That teachers will employ a variety of teaching strategies for coping with the new and the unexpected. Successful change may also be related to levels of teaching skills and teaching background.

5. That support and development programmes are needed to help teachers cope with the implications of change; collaborative action involving both teachers & specialists is a likely way to achieve this.

From the issues contained in these aims, questions and hypotheses four broad categories of analysis suggest themselves; these in turn can be sub-categorized as the data emerges, with each category and sub-category being reported in a subsequent section of this chapter. The broad categories initially identified are:-

8.2. Perspectives on educational traditions
8.3. Perspectives on educational change and the effects of change
8.4. Teachers' skills and strategies for managing change.
8.5. Providing support for teachers in a context of change.

Emerging sub-categories are labelled as headings within each section.

8.2. Perspectives on educational traditions

The importance of Slovak educational traditions passed on from one generation to another, and the potential consequences of failing to acknowledge them, has been a major issue in this research project. In Chapter 1, it was argued that educational reforms which took place in the 1920s and 1930s, as well as developments in linguistics during the same period, had a profound effect on approaches to English language teaching in Slovakia and in many other countries within the East and Central European region. Writers such as Johnson (1985:112) describe how , under the influence of the education systems of Western European countries such as Austria and Germany, Czechoslovakia quickly developed its system of *4-year or 8-year gymnazia* and vocational schools for secondary education, the school-leaving *maturita* with its tradition of oral examining, as well as a strong emphasis on the teaching of foreign languages and provision for systematic training of foreign language teachers. At the same time the Prague school of linguistics produced a series of linguists who were also educationalists, and who were involved in the preparation of language teaching syllabi and the writing of coursebooks.

Interviews with ELT specialists such as Tandlichova (see p.289), as well as those with teachers in focus groups show that the influence of such traditions established in the inter-war years has survived the events of 1945-89 ,when, under the communist regime, attempts were seemingly made by the Soviet Union to standardize the education systems of many countries in the region. Indeed, the first part of the 1996 OECD report for the Czech Republic presented by the Czech authorities goes so far as to argue that:

Education, in the Czech Republic - the country of Comenius - as anywhere else, is probably more than any other social sector or subsystem, deeply rooted in national history and traditions. These traditions were radically abandoned following the communist take-over and a new foreign model imposed. A certain return to the pre-communist and particularly pre-war situation was to some extent an inevitable and normal development. In that sense, it could even be said that a restoration, rather than a revolution, has accompanied the end of the communist regime. (1996:19)

While broadly agreeing with the sentiments expressed in the first sentence, I would argue that the need to restore "radically abandoned" educational traditions has perhaps been over-exaggerated, as part of the ongoing denigration of the policies of a discredited communist regime. Under communism it is certainly true to a great extent that the compulsory learning of Russian overshadowed the limited opportunities for learning other languages such as English and French. It is also true that certain changes to the structure of the education system itself were made during the same period and that these interfered with traditions established in the 1920s. An example of this would be the attempt to reduce the status of the pre-eminent *gymnazia* and promote vocational schools in their place (Jennik 1980:33); an associated development being the restriction of *gymnazia* education to 4 years, ensuring that all 10-14 year old children received the same education at basic school.

However, if the changes were as radical as is suggested, the question arises how it has been possible to restore 'abandoned' traditions after a period of more than 50 years. It is difficult to imagine that there are many educationalists in a position to remember what the education system was like in Czechoslovakia before World War 2 , so how then has so much survived in the collective memory?

The most likely answer to this question is that traditions survived not just as remembered phenomena, but were also passed on as an integral part of educational practice. Even while the communist regime was promoting the learning of Russian and establishing well-resourced Departments of Russian at the major Czech and Slovak universities, foreign language teaching continued especially (but not only) at the elite language schools described by Tandlichova (see p. 290). At elite language schools there was also a surprising amount of methodological freedom with G. (see p.173-4) reporting, for example, that imported textbooks such as those written by L.G. Alexander were available for use. In fact, there is evidence to suggest (e.g. p.282-3) that the main problems for English language teachers under communism came not from the imposition of alien traditions, but from a lack of opportunities and resources which dated from the pre-communist era, and which meant that teachers had little contact with the 'living' English language and its native speakers. Thus, the observations of Dovciak concerning the teaching of English as a 'dead' language (see p.282) refer not just to the period of communist rule, but also to the preceding years.

Evidence from this research project also suggests that, whatever the dangers to educational traditions posed by communism, an equal set of dangers has been posed in the post-1989 period by the advent of different traditions imported from the West, which have manifested themselves through language teaching materials, methods and approaches, as well as through the persons of native speaker teachers and 'experts'. Unlike the traditions of the Soviet model of education, these have the advantage of not being associated with a discredited political regime, yet it seems that they have very often also been imposed, albeit in more subtle ways.

Cultural traditions within an educational context

Some of the ideas concerning educational traditions which emerge from interview, focus group and school visit journal data point towards a shared experience of culture; others are more concerned with the ideological content of materials, methods and approaches. In this section, the question of the importance of cultural traditions within an educational context will be examined.

Shared cultural traditions provide Slovak teachers and educational specialists with a kind of 'map of everyday reality' (see Ch.2, p.43-44) which informs their educational practice and through which this practice can be interpreted. The way that teachers teach and test their students, the way new teachers are trained, the involvement of university specialists and textbook writers in the teaching of foreign languages are both part of and are influenced by cultural traditions which reflect the society in which Slovak teachers live. In Chapter 2 it was argued that educational practices are also cultural practices and that it is impossible to consider them as being 'neutral', somehow dissociated from the wider cultural context through which Slovak citizens live and make sense of their lives. In his interview (see p.273) Widdowson appears to be strongly influenced by this kind of argument, when he stresses the importance of respecting established educational and linguistic scholarship within a particular culture and expresses his dismay at the cultural insensitivity of many imported foreign language teaching projects.

In the data collected by this research project there are many examples of traditions within an educational context which reflect wider cultural values. Tandlichova, for example, (p.135), talks about the tradition of "teacher scholars" which originated at the turn of the century, and by which teachers of foreign languages tended also to be scholars of linguistics ("many of them members of the Prague school"). Dovciak (p.131) remarks on the dominant tradition of a philological approach to language learning by which it is seen to be desirable to make the study of foreign languages closely connected with the study of Czech or Slovak. Such an approach is also the domain of the "teacher scholar".

The idea of the teacher as language expert has persisted within the educational culture of the region until the present day when teachers feel that the high status once accorded to them is suddenly under threat (see focus group comments, p.158). Tandlichova also points to the traditional authority of educational institutions within society and in particular to the importance of the Ministry of Education's SPU (Statny Pedagogicka Ustov) with respect to the English language teaching syllabus adopted

by Slovak State Schools. Until 1989, the SPU prescribed the syllabus and textbooks for all schools within the public sector, with the tradition being that the syllabus preceded the textbooks (rather than vice versa). Although many teachers resented the level of prescriptiveness under the communist regime (see teacher comments p.178) , nevertheless it should be pointed out that the tradition for a standardized day-by-day teaching syllabus preceded communism; the idea of a varied book-driven syllabus which has replaced it is totally unfamiliar within the Slovak educational context. Once this fact is understood, it is much easier to anticipate the kind of unexpected problems which imported materials bring to State school teachers (see next section).

Other longstanding cultural traditions within education mentioned by Slovak teachers include the importance accorded to the testing of oral production, both in the *maturita* and as part of a process of continual assessment familiar to all Slovak school children, by which homework, prepared orally, is recited by individual students in front of the rest of the class, who are sometimes invited to contribute towards suggesting a suitable grade, which is then entered into the class gradebook. (see teacher comments p.169 & p.205). This tradition of oral testing is carried on right through the education system and is also the main means of assessment at university level.

A final example refers to the teaching of culture itself, discussed by G. (see p.203-4), by which 'British culture' or 'American culture' is taught and tested as a body of knowledge, with a strong emphasis on geographical or historical facts, short biographies of famous people and details of 'typical' festivals, customs and modes of behaviour.

All of these educational practices, which are taken for granted as an integral part of Slovak educational culture, are highly influential, with their effects being felt in many different aspects of foreign language teaching. For instance, the prescribing of a particular coursebook to fit a specific level of the syllabus has traditionally meant that no other materials were regarded as necessary. This has resulted in a commonly-held

attitude among teachers that supplementary skills materials (for example) are superfluous to requirements. Similarly, traditional attitudes towards teaching 'British' or 'American' culture have ensured that they can both be treated as clearly-defined content subjects for which a very specific preparation can be prescribed.

When such traditions reflecting cultural values are ignored by imported materials, methods, approaches and by the planners of educational projects, teachers are left to cope with the consequences, and are forced through circumstances to provide solutions which will balance the forces of tradition and change. I would therefore argue strongly that culturally-specific aspects of educational practice need always to be identified when change is planned, and at the very least, recognized as an important consideration when teachers are subjected to the influence of unplanned or unintentional change through the introduction of new materials or methods.

Ideological traditions within an educational context

If cultural traditions provide teachers with a 'map of everyday reality' informing their educational practice, different ideologies and ideological traditions might be seen as the means of interpreting such a map. In Chapter 2.5., p.52, it was argued that "culture *is* the everyday reality which people live, while ideology makes sense of this reality". Thus, for example, a culture which assumed great differences between riches and poverty might be sustained by an ideology which labelled the poor or unemployed as "scroungers" or "layabouts" and opposed by another ideology which demanded greater social justice.

The persistence or continued dominance of a particular set of beliefs (whether conscious or subconscious) in a educational context can give rise to ideological traditions concerning what constitutes 'good' practice among teachers and other educationalists. Ideological traditions underlie language teaching materials, methods and approaches and provide a justification which goes beyond the simple cultural explanation ("this is the way we do it") for teaching in a certain way. Such traditions

may be adhered to consciously by teachers and considered as genuinely containing the most relevant or effective methods for teaching foreign languages in a Slovak context; alternatively, it is equally likely that they are (subconsciously) considered to provide a logical or commonsensical explanation for how to proceed, thus preserving through consensus the educational status quo (see Fairclough 1989:33).

In Chapter 2, p.54, Clark provided a summary of three broad educational ideological traditions, classical humanism, reconstructionism and progressivism, which, it was argued , correspond roughly to three conflicting forces in the context of Slovak or Czech education. Following this argument, the "abandoned traditions" of the OECD report (see p.214) are seen to be supported by a classical humanist ideology; those traditions seen to be imposed by the Soviet model of education with its strong emphasis on political education are considered to be reconstructionist; finally, a progressivist ideology, emphasizing 'whole person education' and 'learner-centredness' is regarded as being an important driving force behind much of the imported materials and methods now coming into Slovak schools. It can thus be argued that, using Clark's ideological labels, the present situation for Slovak teachers is one in which a reconstructionist ideology associated with a discredited regime has now been replaced by a restored classical humanist ideology, which in turn is threatened by the ever-increasing influence of a progressivist ideology which dominates foreign language teaching in the West.

The rise of progressivism, with its emphasis on the learner rather than the teacher, has been accompanied by an increase in the questioning of other established educational ideologies and practices which are deemed to be 'non-progressivist' in nature. Widdowson, (p.127), maintains that this has resulted in a failure to distinguish between *authoritative* and *authoritarian* knowledge and beliefs, which in the East and Central European region is complicated by the fact that the authority of established scholarship is often (wrongly, in my view) associated with communist hegemonic power. Thus, both ordinary Slovak teachers (because of communism) and non-Slovak educational project managers and teachers (because of progressivism) are

seemingly prepared to reject a significant accumulation of learning and scholarship. I believe that Widdowson is right to criticize the short-sightedness of project planners in this respect, and to lament the fact that Slovak teachers run the risk of "conniving in their own ruin" through the recognition and acceptance of a new progressivist hegemony.

The danger of a progressivist ideology being imposed in Slovakia seems very real when data from other interviews and focus groups are examined. Those involved in educational planning and materials production such as Freebairn (as an ELT coursebook author) or Butler (as a British Council projects manager) seem to emphasize the shortcomings of educational practices which are deemed 'traditional', whether intentionally or unintentionally. Grammar-translation language teaching methods, in particular, are subjected to criticism, being dismissed as part of the pre-1989 education system (Butler p.150) and therefore, presumably, reflecting beliefs and values which should now be abandoned. Freebairn (see p.141) does not attempt to explain why Polish teachers taught through grammar-translation should have excellent levels of English, but prefers to concentrate on the superficial disadvantages of the approach. The expressions which she uses in describing grammar-translation classes, "older textbooks", "older methodology", "teacher-led", "from the top", "follow lockstep" all contribute towards achieving the same effect - that grammar-translation is now out-of-date, inappropriate, unmotivating and discredited.

Teachers' comments on grammar-translation and 'traditional' approaches to the teaching of languages are more mixed, perhaps reflecting a current ideological confusion. When teachers such as Z. p.159, A..p.177, and T. p.171 lament the shortcomings of the grammar teaching syllabus of various imported coursebook titles (see section 8.3), they all seem to be tacitly agreeing that the methods underlying the new materials are less effective than grammar-translation for teaching Slovak students to be grammatically accurate. However, from the focus group data it seems that it is more difficult for teachers to openly advocate the merits of a grammar-translation approach: it is only when discussing their actual teaching of a lesson

(e.g.T.p.207-8) that they feel confident enough to defend the use of techniques such as explicitly stating grammar rules, comparing English and Slovak grammar and translating illustrative examples - all of which suit a deductive approach to grammar-teaching using grammar-translation methods.

In contrast, teachers are much more critical of other aspects of 'traditional' practice exemplified by pre-1989 coursebooks. A., p.167, argues that "old socialist" textbook topics had no connection with reality. She and her colleagues in the Dolny Kubin focus group also appear to reject the possibility of using other locally-produced coursebooks not supported by a reconstructionist ideology. T., for example, argues (p.166) that students would think first in Slovak and not in English (assuming that the materials were to make use of both languages) . Meanwhile J. (ibid.) believes that topics concerning Slovakia would be "memorized" (meaning learnt 'parrot-fashion') by students, rather than being clearly understood. A. believes that it is more important to concentrate on adapting the new imported materials to the reality of Slovak classrooms, rather than producing an alternative, which would perhaps be more relevant to local needs. It seems that in the minds of all of these teachers 'locally-produced' is still synonymous with 'discredited' because of the influence of the imposed ideology of the communist regime.

Another ideological issue which emerges from the data concerns the role of native speakers as language models or as representatives of educational progressivism. In Dovciak's opinion (p.133) there is a conflict of interests between these two roles. The native speaker teachers in his university department and the organizations which send them (such as the British Council and USIS) see the native speaker as an educational "change agent" (see also Butler p.152), who should be involved primarily in training Slovak teachers in English language teaching methodology. Dovciak, on the other hand, values the linguistic abilities of native speakers more than their expertise in language teaching methodology. For him, native speakers as language models are irreplaceable, while new approaches to language teaching methodology can always be gained from books or by sending Slovak teachers for training abroad.

Tandlichova, (p.138-9), broadly agrees with this view. While she acknowledges the considerable contribution made by native speaker specialist lecturers recruited by the British Council and USIS, she believes that it is the responsibility of regional *Metodicke Centra* and Slovak teachers themselves to take the initiative for providing methodological support where it is needed. Native speakers, she believes, remain 'experts' in their own language . In contrast, the comments of Slovak teachers in focus group interviews and in discussions of lesson observations reveal that their main concern is not so much the precise role of native speaker teachers, but rather the problem of being directly compared with them (see, for example, p.391).

In Chapter 2, p.64, the question of the native speaker teacher as 'expert' was debated with writers such as Pochiecha (1992) expressing unease with the respect accorded to unqualified native speaker teachers on the mere basis of their linguistic expertise, while Medvecky (1995) described the problems he faced taking over a class from a native speaker teacher with a different background and a more progressivist orientation. The juxtaposition of native speaker and non-native speaker teachers from widely differing backgrounds and with widely differing teaching approaches, which has been brought about by the post-1989 influx of (mainly) British and American teachers into Slovakia, has perhaps failed in some respects, in that initially high expectations of the levels of success of such joint co-operation have often been disappointed with both sides experiencing much frustration. But in one important respect it can be argued that such ventures can be judged a success: they have managed to bring into sharper focus the importance of ideological traditions in foreign language teaching and the problems which can ensue when different traditions meet. I would maintain that a recognition of such differences is the starting-point for successful change: without it the kind of the problematic effects of change described in the next section can prove difficult to anticipate and even more difficult to address.

8.3. Perspectives on educational change and the effects of change

Teacher and student motivation for change

In Chapter 2.1. it was suggested that much of the literature on educational change is written from the perspective of the educational planner, and that it tends to depict the teacher as an obstacle to progress. Those who seem less than enthusiastic about change are labelled "resisters", and a prime objective of planned change is to find a means of overcoming such "resistance". However, this simplistic view completely fails to take into account the perspective of teachers themselves. In the case of Slovakia, the data obtained from this research project reveals that, in spite of the pace of change and its problematic effects, teachers are generally positive about change, whether planned or unplanned, but reserve the right to subject it to their own critical appraisal. What is uncertain is the extent to which their desire for change is motivated by a lingering negative reaction to the former communist regime, and in particular its attempts to politicise the education system itself.

To British observers, such as Butler (p.150), this issue is not really in doubt. According to this view, the end of communism has resulted in a more 'western' outlook on the part of younger teachers, accompanied by an equally pronounced willingness among their students to embrace new methods and approaches for learning foreign languages such as English. In contrast, older teachers, because of their background and experience, have become set in their ways, and are therefore less open to new ideas. I believe that such a point of view should be firmly rejected, since evidence from focus group data collected as part of this research project clearly demonstrates that older, more experienced teachers can be equally motivated by the possibility of change when it is perceived to be based on sound principles and of potential benefit to students. But such teachers, sensibly and realistically, tend to balance the perceived benefits of change against potential problems. For example, Mj., an experienced basic school teacher of English, (p.161), while genuinely welcoming changes in language teaching methodology which will open the "door of creativity" for her students, still feels that there are criticisms to be made of imported

coursebook materials and methods (see p.227). B., an experienced requalifying teacher of English, (p.177) feels that her strong instinct for change needs to be tempered by an awareness of her own limitations, especially with respect to the level of her own English. This kind of reaction does not reveal so much an interest for self-preservation as a desire to create the right conditions to make changes in educational practice work, having gained the full confidence of her students.

Specific sources of motivation for change are mentioned by several teachers, as well as by Freebairn (p.142), who emphasizes the motivational power of new books for both learner and teacher. Teachers in focus group interviews such as S. (p.161) agree that the greater choice of language teaching materials is a very positive factor, while E. (p.165) is encouraged by the way in which the new materials make her students reflect on their own learning. The most welcome change for A., an experienced requalifying teacher (p.178), is the fact that she no longer feels constrained by the kind of rigid syllabus, which she believes was the norm under the previous regime; she genuinely feels that she now has great freedom to choose what she will teach and how she will teach it, which she welcomes. A.(p.167), a newly-qualified and inexperienced teacher, shares the same views, comparing her situation as a learner under communism with that of her own students now, and arguing that the new materials allow teachers to teach in a more interesting way. Among all the teachers participating in focus groups only one requalifying teacher, E.(p.178) prefers to dwell on the fact that increased student enthusiasm has meant more work for teachers rather than emphasize the benefits of such enthusiasm.

Teacher perspectives on problematic aspects of change

The extent to which teachers are able and willing to subject educational change to constructive criticism was questioned in Chapter 2.7. As far as this Slovak case study is concerned, in the aftermath of the fall of communism it can be argued that there is much pressure on teachers to be seen to be looking forwards rather than backwards. Indeed to be labelled a "resister" to change in this context might have a worse implication even than that suggested by some educational planners: such

"resistance" can be interpreted as sympathy with the underlying aims of the former regime. It would not be surprising if Slovak teachers were therefore to present themselves as being 100% in favour of sweeping changes to educational materials and methods, at the same time welcoming enthusiastically and uncritically anything which seemed new or different in approach.

However, the evidence from focus group interviews and (particularly) discussions with individuals concerning observed lessons reveals that most Slovak teachers are not prepared to accept major changes without critical examination. Once again, it seems that the older, more experienced teachers (who might be tempted to play the role of 'converts') lead the way in this respect. Their younger less experienced counterparts, who Butler (p.150) considers to have a more 'western' outlook, come across as seeming less critical and more prepared to accept the problematic effects of using new materials and approaches, without really appearing to address the issue of their appropriacy for their students' needs.

Most of the criticisms voiced in focus groups and post-lesson discussions centre on the imported materials which the majority of basic and secondary schools are now using (see Chapter 4) and which generally promote a communicative approach to language teaching. In particular, those aspects of communicative materials and methods which differ most from longstanding cultural and ideological traditions (see previous section) are subjected to special scrutiny. The teaching of grammar clearly comes into this category with experienced basic school teachers such as Z. (p.159) pointing out the shortcomings of the grammar teaching syllabus of "Discoveries" and experienced *gymnazium* teacher T. (p.195) commenting that "after Strategies no one will pass an entrance test". Not all of the teachers feel that they are in a position to assess the entire the entire syllabus in this way (those that do present a strong case for their criticisms), but many individuals are prepared to point to specific aspects of grammar teaching in the imported materials which they find problematic. For instance, a requalifying teacher, A. (p.177), laments the lack of grammar explanations in coursebooks and concludes that a more in-depth approach to grammar is required

in individual coursebook units if students' grammatical accuracy is really to improve.

The inclusion in coursebooks of examples of ungrammatical language along with neologisms and unfamiliar varieties is discussed by two teachers, T.& J.(p.170-1), in the same focus group. While they accept the principle of exposing their classes to such items, in practice this can cause confusion among students and loss of face for the teacher, especially if there is no guidance included in the coursebook teacher's book. From the observer's perspective it does seem unfair that non-native speaker teachers are supposed to be aware of grammatical inaccuracies which are sometimes seen as acceptable or the latest slang terms emanating from youth culture in the UK or USA. Coursebook writers such as Freebairn recognize this problem (p.142), but still maintain that it is necessary for coursebooks to be linguistically up-to-date, even if this places an extra cultural burden on both learners and teachers.

Many teachers in focus groups also point to the problematic content of coursebook texts. While not wishing to see a return to the communist era when coursebook texts were often loaded with political ideology, they still view the content of reading and listening texts in many imported coursebooks with misgivings. Younger teachers such as T., (p.164) and A., (p.165) , while being generally satisfied with the teaching approach of the "Headway" series, feel that the coursebook texts present "unfamiliar topics with Western values". J., (p.198), feels that both texts and activities based on texts can be culturally insensitive or inappropriate, while G. (p.170 & 200) considers that many topics and activities , because of their unfamiliar cultural content, are inaccessible to Slovak learners. According to A., (p.185), materials designed for young learners are often too sophisticated for the age group.

The number of critical comments concerning coursebook topics seem to indicate that Freebairn's perception of universal topics appealing to young people across nationalities is flawed. In lesson observation discussions in particular, these teachers made it clear that it was not so much their own aversion to some of the coursebook topics that made them unsuccessful in class, but their own views combined with those

of their students and the question of educational cultural traditions (see previous section). In a Slovak educational context both parties seem more at ease concentrating on the kind of 'safe' topics, which G., (p.203), points out will be of greatest benefit to them in preparing for exams. This does not mean that students and their teachers are not interested in discussing controversial topics such as drug addiction, but that they tend not to see the language class as an appropriate place to put forward what may be very personal and private points of view.

Another area of concern for Slovak teachers who participated in focus group discussions and interviews is that of providing suitable coursebook material for beginners. Mj. (p.158), for example, expresses her frustration at the pace of activities in many imported titles, which have perhaps been designed with false beginners in mind. This problem is compounded by the coursebook's need to present everything in English (often supported by an ideology which claims that this is beneficial, as well as inevitable), including "long instructions" which cause problems for teachers such as M.(p.159) and her students. S.(ibid.) laments the fact that few imported titles contain bilingual glossaries, while T. (p.171) is irritated by the absence of phonetic transcriptions for new English words which appear without their Slovak equivalents. Meanwhile, A's. classes with young learners (reported p.184) are complicated by the fact that everything has to be explained in Slovak .

Tandlichova, as the author of the "Anglictina" series, is in favour of making good use of Slovak as a resource when teaching beginners. She sees a serious disadvantage in the complete absence of the learner's mother tongue in imported materials (see p.137), and argues that this lack of an important resource will make the student's task much more difficult, an opinion supported by much second language acquisition research (see, for example, Ellis 1997:127).

Other criticisms of imported materials range from problems with the over-complex layout and design of many imported books to the (unsurprising) incompatibility of almost all new materials with grammar-oriented university entrance exams, (T. p.204

& p.172). Whether materials which focus heavily on communicative activities will have to adapt to suit such exams, or whether the exams are forced to change to suit a more communicative syllabus being taught in secondary schools, the only sure prediction that can be made is that, as G. points out (p.174), the certainties of the old syllabus have been lost and teachers must adjust to a norm of rapid change. The fact that Slovak teachers show evidence of facing such change with a critical rather than a resigned outlook gives much cause for optimism in the future.

Teachers' changing perceptions of students, their parents & themselves

Another type of change which Slovak teachers are having to adjust to concerns their own roles as teachers, and their relationship with students and the parents of students. The evidence from the case study data shows that teachers are finding it difficult to come to terms with what they feel is a reduced status for themselves in the post-1989 educational world. The tradition of the 'teacher-scholar' (see previous section) seems long gone, and teachers feel less appreciated, especially by parents (see, for example, comments by A.p.157). A highly experienced gymnazium teacher, M. (p.173 & 169) believes that in the new Slovakia people are generally more business-oriented and respect businessmen more and the teaching profession less, while children emulate their parents' diminishing respect by being less well-behaved in class. In all of the focus group interviews there were some participants who lamented the general decline in student behaviour, which they explain in one of two ways: either students are less passive and more ready to question the teacher's authority (M. p.161), or students have been influenced by the lack of stimulus at home and the fact that education is not valued as much as it was (S.p.161).

In the new post-1989 Slovakia some students now have opportunities to travel to English-speaking countries which were denied to their parents. In the opinion of G., (p.174), this puts extra pressure on teachers of English, since such students are likely to return speaking English which they judge to be more fluent than that of their teachers. While teachers believe that in terms of language knowledge and accuracy they are still well ahead of even those students who travel abroad (see A's comments,

p.178), nevertheless they realize that returnees can seriously disrupt the way in which they teach their classes and thus threaten their authority. In the next sections of this chapter we examine the question of how teachers can manage the problematic effects of such changes in their teaching situation and what kinds of support can be provided for them.

8.4. Teacher skills & strategies for managing change

As was first pointed out in Chapter 2, much of the literature on the management of change assumes the presence of a 'change agent' (or agents) , an outsider or insider who will help to instigate the process of change with clear aims in mind. In an educational context this person (or persons) could be a specialist teacher trainer, a project manager or an individual teacher who has been given or has assumed the task of introducing some kind of change such as the introduction of new teaching materials or tests, and will actively promote the benefits of change among 'change recipients'. However, it is clear from the evidence presented by this research project that in reality the situation is always more complex, and that the management of change cannot easily be reduced to a discussion of the roles of change agents and recipients. In fact, particularly when educational change is unplanned, every teacher must necessarily assume a dual role, being to a certain extent both 'agent' and 'recipient' (see also Chapter 2., p.39). Some recent ELT publications have begun to acknowledge this fact: for example Head & Taylor (1997:150-174) argue that teachers must assume much of the responsibility for their own change:

People who decide to take control of their own development may be in a stronger position both to initiate the kind of change they would like for themselves, and to hold on to an inner sense of direction amid the pressures that external change forces upon them.

Unfortunately, the evidence from this case study seems to suggest that , at least within the context of ELT projects, the idea of a 'cascade model' of change still persists, with Bolitho (quoted pp.133-4) seeing British Council lecturers in Slovakia as agents of change rather than partners in the change process. Meanwhile, Butler (p.152) without using the term "change agent" conveys the same impression, with the lecturers

providing input and "the locals taking it on board". If teachers are to be seen as managers of change, and not just as its recipients, two key elements need to be taken into consideration: their own skills and strategies in coping with change, and the support which needs to be provided to help them help themselves. In this section the question of teacher skills and strategies will be addressed.

A distinction between 'skills' and 'strategies' tends to be made, according to which a skill is considered to be a special ability (perhaps acquired by training) for performing a task or series of tasks. On the other hand, a strategy (in an educational context) is defined by the *Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics* as "a procedure used in learning, thinking etc. which serve as a way of reaching a goal". (It could be added that both skills and strategies can be either conscious or unconscious). Such a distinction only becomes blurred when attempting to label a mix of skills and strategies, as is the case, for example, with the term "study skills". In the following sections, skills and strategies, will, as far as possible, always be considered separately.

Teacher skills

The perceived limitations of Slovak teachers' spoken and written English is discussed by Dovciak (p.131), who argues that under communism, while their knowledge of the English language system was not in doubt, Slovak teachers were generally seen to be relatively unskilled in spoken English in particular; this was mostly because their opportunities to use the spoken language were very limited with few of them travelling to English-speaking countries and few native speakers coming to Slovakia. As a result, in the post-communist period, many teachers feel that their main cause for concern with respect to their own professional development is the need to improve such skills (see for example B.p.175).

However, in a context of educational change, it can be argued that, for the majority of teachers who are already competent speakers of English, perfecting linguistic skills is of psychological rather than practical value, while other skill areas, which would help

in the management of change, are neglected. The kind of skills which teachers need to cope with change include the ability to subject new ideas to critical appraisal, to identify potential problem areas in new materials and methods, and to be able to assess the needs of their students when change is being introduced.

From the focus group interview and lesson observation data collected by this research project it seems that the younger, less experienced teachers who were interviewed, while they are excellent speakers and writers of English, are poorly equipped to deal with unplanned change. A typical case is A.(pp.163, 185 & 188), who in some of her classes has not only had to cope with unfamiliar materials, but has also had to adapt her teaching to the needs of an unfamiliar age group (11-12 year olds), having been trained to teach much older teenagers (from 15-18 years). Additionally, the very heavy workload which she has been asked to assume (and which is arguably much greater than would have been expected under the previous educational regime) means that she is unable to cope without support. Since the only regularly available means of support is the coursebook teachers' book, she is heavily dependent on this for planning all of her teaching and for anticipating the needs of her students. On the rare occasions when she decides to experiment with her own ideas (see p.188), the results in class reveal the lack of a variety of teaching and management skills, and she is forced to return to her state of dependence on the ideas of a textbook which are not specifically tailored to the Slovak educational context. The overall outcome of this frustrating series of events could almost be classified as a process of 'de-skilling', according to which A. and other colleagues (see, for example, T.p.189) fail to achieve sufficient pedagogical independence to allow the development of the skills associated with the successful management of change. In all of the three key areas identified above, critical appraisal, the anticipation of problem areas and the identification of student needs, they are seen to be seriously deficient when compared with their more experienced counterparts.

Teacher strategies

If teachers need certain skills to enable them to manage the process of change, they also need strategies for applying such skills - procedures which will help them critically reflect, address the problems posed by new materials and approaches, or ensure that the kind of solutions which they produce are appropriate to their students' needs. Specific change management strategies derived from the case study data include the creation of new materials to address a need which has been identified, the adaptation and supplementation of imported materials, the combining of different approaches, and the development of critical appraisal techniques.

The creation of new materials is the most extreme of the strategies mentioned above and, unsurprisingly, it is seen as an impracticable (and even undesirable) solution by many teachers taking part in focus group interviews. A. and T. (p.166), for example, believe that to invest time and money in Slovak-produced coursebooks to suit local needs is really a waste of time, since much of the work would involve duplicating materials which are already adequate as long as they are adapted slightly. However, teachers such as G. (p.171), who are more involved in the preparation of students for *maturita* and university entrance exams, disagree. G. believes that a coursebook for students who speak Slavic languages would provide excellent possibilities for good grammar teaching, since English structures could be compared with one or more of the regional languages in a way that would be meaningful to all students. Such a book would support and strengthen Slovak grammar teaching traditions, which G. clearly feels need to be maintained if students are to succeed in their most important exams. Tandlichova (p.137) also supports the production of regional materials but for slightly different reasons. She believes the imported materials currently in use , while being for the most part ideologically acceptable, fail to make any allowances for the cultural values of most Slovak learners, and that an up-to-date regional textbook (she mentioned "Criss Cross" as an example) would contain topic matter which is more suited to Slovak learners' interests and level of understanding.

The change management strategy most commonly mentioned by teachers in both focus groups and lesson observation discussions is that of adapting or supplementing new coursebook materials and activities. Although this seems a sensible solution to the problem of unsuitable or inadequate materials, it does make several assumptions: that time will be made available for this, that teachers are sufficiently skilled in choosing the right supplementary material or making the right changes, and that they have the means to reproduce any extra materials for their students.

G.(p.169) complains that the time spent by English teachers in looking for supplementary materials or ideas for extra activities is not recognized by the school, or indeed by teachers of other subjects, who (she believes) do not really have this problem. In several focus groups similar comments were made in this respect, with many teachers maintaining that mathematics or history teachers (say) are still able to teach in the 'traditional' way, basing their lessons on one textbook, and repeating the lessons year after year. A certain degree of resentment caused by this observation, added to the fact that Slovak teachers of English do tend to have busy workloads and little free time, has resulted in a situation where most teachers take the shortest route to materials adaptation and supplementation - the photocopying of other published materials to provide an instant solution for a deficient area. This not only ignores copyright constraints and contributes to the problem of materials piracy in the region, but also is less likely to solve the original problem, since teachers are not required to spend the time needed for thinking about and designing new activities. This 'easy' solution also introduces another problem: published materials need to be photocopied, whereas much simpler original activities might be designed with little written input, perhaps making use of just the blackboard. The comments of teachers such as Z. (p.161) and B.(p.176) reveal both their dependency on photocopied supplementary materials and their frustration when copying facilities prove to be inadequate or beyond the school's budget.

However, from the data there is also evidence that some teachers are prepared to make the extra effort required to produce their own original solutions to problems

posed by unsuitable materials. J.(p.198) talks of the need to make certain coursebook tasks more focussed (and indeed demonstrated how to do this with a listening text in her own teaching). This kind of solution requires skill on the part of the teacher, but no extra investment in new materials. Several teachers believe that more guidance is required with respect to coursebook topics, with G. (p.200) emphasizing the need to 'Slovakize' certain topics, and both J. (p.198) and G.(p.203) arguing that their students should be provided with more cultural input to help them prepare for the *maturita*, while M. (p.203) strongly believes that teachers should control more closely the selection of suitable topics for students, presumably by omitting or changing those considered unsuitable which appear in their coursebooks. All of these different ideas can be put into practice using only the teacher's skill and her time.

An interesting strategy suggested by several of the more experienced teachers is that of combining different teaching approaches to achieve a balance of activities suitable both for the formal teaching of grammar and the development of students' communication skills. First of all, at the lesson planning stage, T. (p.171) makes use of grammar lists from old pre-1989 coursebooks to check that the syllabus of her imported coursebook is not deficient in any key items which students will need. For the actual teaching of grammar several experienced teachers such as G.(p.195) and A. (p.177) have the confidence to make use of traditional Czech and Slovak textbooks, in spite of their association with the communist era. G. explains (p.173) that she teaches grammar from old books which contain an element of contrastive analysis and relies on new books to develop students' written and spoken communication skills. Both G. and A. believe that they can achieve the right balance of fluency and accuracy work in this way. The only real drawback of this approach is mentioned by B. (p.176), who also prefers to adopt a balance of two different approaches, but only has 3 hours a week with her classes in which to do so. Nevertheless, in spite of such problems, it is clear from the successful experience of teachers such as G. that the strategy of combining different teaching approaches and traditions in this way can be of great benefit in seeking to overcome the problematic effects of change. I would also add that experienced teachers who have the skills and confidence to achieve such

a balance of approaches have an important role to play in passing on their ideas to less experienced colleagues.

Finally, perhaps the most important strategy available to teachers which occasionally emerges from the data is to actively seek to create the kind of "climate of critical appraisal" mentioned by Widdowson in his interview (p.126). Reflecting on change and its effects, he suggests, is vital at every level of the educational hierarchy and at every stage of the educational process. It can also be argued that his description of the establishment of a "conniving ethos" at the level of ELT project management and evaluation (ibid.) means that it is even more important for individual teachers to "hold on to an inner sense of direction" (as Head & Taylor 1997 suggest) and to be prepared to subject aspects of educational change to rigorous critical appraisal. How they might be able to achieve this will be dealt with in the next section.

8.5. Providing support for teachers in a context of change

Among the aims of this research project perhaps the most important relate to the provision of support for teachers who are faced with problems caused by educational change. Questions in focus group interviews (see p.156) were designed to encourage teachers to discuss the kinds of support currently available, as well as those which they felt should be available. From these discussions, from interviews with specialists and from school visit journal entries a picture emerges in which three main sources of support are acknowledged: support from ELT projects and from those organizations which initiate them, support from ELT publishers and from published materials, and finally local support from schools, other teaching colleagues, university departments, *Metodicke Centra*, and even parents.

The track record of ELT projects

Although it has been pointed out elsewhere in this report that many of the post-1989 changes in Slovak ELT have been unplanned,occurring as a result of a particular combination of circumstances rather than the implementation of central decision-making, there is one area in which a discussion of the planning of change is relevant

to the aims of this research project - that of ELT projects, and specifically English language teacher education projects. These have generally been sponsored either by trans-European schemes such as Phare or Tempus or by organizations such as the British Council, USIS, East European Partnership, and Peace Corps, representing one particular Western country. Potentially such programmes could bring great benefits to Slovak teachers and considerable amounts of time and money have been spent working towards this end.

However, the evidence collected by this research project seems to indicate that, despite the efforts of the organizations involved, the outcomes of such projects have been rather mixed. A good illustration of this can be obtained by comparing the views of Bolitho (quoted p.133-4) with those of Dovciak (p.133). While Bolitho, in his role as evaluating consultant for some of the British Council ELT projects in the region, believes that there has been "not enough concentration on methodology" in teacher education projects in Slovakia, Dovciak maintains that such projects have tended to concentrate *too much* on ELT methodology, and not sufficiently on the teaching of English itself. Clearly, there is a considerable difference here in the perception of the real needs of Slovak teachers.

Widdowson (pp.125-6 & 128-9) rightly takes issue with the views of Bolitho and others when discussing the main priorities for teacher education projects in Slovakia and the rest of the region. He argues that the cultural traditions of the region should always be recognized and respected, and that if this means reassessing the prevailing methodological orthodoxy, then this should indeed take place. He also considers that failure to consider the appropriacy of methodological and structural innovations based on 'good practice' will result in culturally insensitive ventures such as has happened with the implementation of the university fast-track programme for foreign language teacher trainees (see also p.130).

With the strong support of the British Council and considerable financial incentives provided by the Phare programme , the fast-track scheme was hurriedly put into

operation in Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and in Slovakia, ignoring longstanding cultural traditions by which teacher training is considered part of a 5-year university degree programme. The result, as Butler acknowledges (p.149), has been the immediate demise of the programme in all the countries concerned as soon as the Phare funding was discontinued. Those who have graduated during the three years in which the programme was running in most of the countries face an uncertain future, with it being by no means certain that their degree qualification will be recognized. It is also unclear whether the short-term aim of the fast-track programme, that of putting foreign language teachers into schools as quickly as possible, has been achieved, with many graduates preferring other more lucrative careers than language teaching (see survey report in Chapter 1, p.27-8). In hindsight, attempting to impose the Western tradition of short-term, more concentrated teacher training, as exemplified by RSA programmes in Britain, seems to have backfired.

From examining such cases, several conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, as Widdowson emphasizes (p.126), the expertise provided by ELT projects should always be tempered with local knowledge and familiarity with longstanding educational traditions. Secondly, the 'cascade' model of teacher support described by Butler (p.152) cannot be transferred and applied to an equal extent in every educational context; in an environment such as Slovakia, with its sophisticated set of cultural and ideological traditions within education, the idea of 'handing over' expertise implicit in the model is just too simplistic. Finally, the more modest aims of ELT projects may prove to be the most long-lasting and most effective. Within the data collected by this project Tandlichova (p.137-8) and many teachers such as M. (p.161) express their gratitude to the British Council for the support provided by small-scale operations such as ELT Resource Centres, or support provided by foreign lecturers working through the local *Metodicke Centra*. Such initiatives work well within the current system, without seeking to impose large-scale changes to the educational system itself.

The above arguments are not intended to suggest that local solutions to problems should always be acknowledged as the most effective or even the most appropriate (see also Holliday's comments quoted in Chapter 2, p.60). What is being proposed is that language teacher education projects in the region should adopt a more realistic stance with respect to the effects of change on existing power structures and hegemonies which depend on the continued acceptance of cultural and ideological traditions for their survival. Working in collaboration with and within such power structures rather than against them will ensure that the gap between the ideas of those who plan and initiate educational projects and the constraints within which the teachers who will implement them have to work is greatly reduced.

The track record of published materials and ELT publishers

A second source of support for English teachers seeking to manage educational change comes from ELT publishers and published materials. Major publishers such as Oxford University Press and Longman have themselves played a significant role in the way educational change has come about in Slovakia since 1989, and it could be argued that they are in some ways responsible for many of the problematic effects of change which teachers are currently experiencing. At any rate, what is certain is that in the immediate aftermath of the 1989 'velvet revolution' their influence was quickly brought to bear on the new Ministry of Education, which faced a problem in deciding on how to advise teachers in a situation where the established foreign language syllabi had been swept away. Longman appear to have been the front-runners in this respect, with G. (p.195) reporting the decision by the Ministry to adopt imported books taken in 1990/1, offering schools a choice of two recommended (and therefore subsidized) titles - "Strategies" or "Blueprint". The importance of such a decision can be gauged by the fact that G's. school is still using "Strategies" as its main English language coursebook. It is also worth pointing out that the "Strategies" series were published in the late 1970s and early 1980s: by 1990 they would have been considered out-of-date in many of Longman's Western European markets (see Freebairn, p.147, for further comments on this topic). Yet, they were successfully promoted within the Slovak Education Ministry, which was persuaded that the series

was appropriate for state school English teaching. As a result , in the late 1990s, G's school are still coping with the problems of integrating the "Strategies" series into their English language teaching.

Elsewhere in this research project report the growing influence of another publisher, Oxford University Press, has been described. Statistics presented in Chapter 4 reveal that Oxford titles now dominate the English language syllabus both in basic and secondary schools, to a certain extent displacing the earlier dominance of Longman. The question arises whether the widespread influence of these two publishers has been accompanied by any sense of responsibility to teachers and their students as the users of publishers' products. Widdowson in his interview, (p.128-9) implies that both a sense of responsibility and a real effort to provide support have become subservient to "the ethos of greed" which has prevailed in the post-1989 frenzy of activity when different publishers have sought to grasp the opportunities offered by a new market for their products. But Freebairn disagrees (p.147), arguing that publishers (such as Longman) do feel responsible to teachers and students and have a good track record in attempting to provide back-up for teachers through various channels: she mentions specifically the excellence of teachers' books, authors' workshops and the efforts of individual publishers' representatives.

From the evidence provided by this research project it appears that the record of publishers in Slovakia, like that of ELT projects, is mixed, with some publishers trying harder than others to balance commercial interests with a caring attitude for their 'customers'. All of them, however, disappoint when support provided as part of their coursebook materials packages is examined. In neither of the schools visited as part of this project was there any evidence of materials provided by publishers specifically to suit the Slovak (or even the regional) context. Teachers relied heavily on internationally-produced coursebook teachers' books to plan their lessons but ran into problems when the suggested activities proved unsuitable for their students (see for example A's lesson, reported on p.187). Elements missing from the international teacher's book (such as English-Slovak glossaries) also had to be provided by the

teachers themselves. More experienced teachers (in the Presov school) proved able to diagnose the deficient areas and correct any imbalances; however, their less experienced colleagues felt that, as their only means of support, the teachers' book suggestions needed to be adhered to quite rigidly. Sometimes missing elements from the coursebooks themselves (eg the lack of pronunciation material in 'Headway' reported by T., p.407) compounded the problem, with the teachers' books also failing to pick up on the deficient area.

It would be in the interests of inexperienced teachers in particular if publishers were prepared to adopt the kind of suggestions made by Freebairn in her interview (p.145). For example, the idea of producing video packs for different regions (or even different countries) in which local teachers could be seen teaching using new coursebook materials, seems very practical: at the same time as the book is being promoted through the video (and therefore satisfying the commercial inclinations of the publisher), relevant support can be provided to teachers who can witness a classroom situation with which they can easily identify. Freebairn emphasizes (quite rightly) the need to show a cross-section of activities on the video, with some things going wrong and well as going right (see p.145). Such a video package could be a source of great encouragement to many teachers, as well as providing an inducement towards critical appraisal of the new materials.

A final point with respect to the support provided by publishers through teachers' books is suggested by a lesson given by T. (reported p.191-2), in which she attempts to persuade her students of the need to evaluate their own learning. T's input for the lesson came from an ELT methodology book, "Recipes for Tired Teachers" (Sion et al. 1984). It would have been interesting if she had been able to call upon resources provided by her coursebook (in this case "Headway") to conduct her evaluation exercise. In other words, the suggestion is that each coursebook package might have a built-in evaluation element, which would encourage and enable teachers to assess their own progress with the materials, as well as that of their students. The kind of suggested activities and procedures put forward by Rea-Dickens and Germaine

(1992:145-158) or Kiely (1999) could act as an initial source of inspiration for such coursebook material.

Local support from institutions and teaching colleagues

The third, and perhaps the most important, type of support for teachers that emerges from the data, is that which is provided locally by teaching colleagues, teacher trainers and Slovak institutions such as the regional *Metodicke Centra* and university foreign language departments. Collaboration between all of these different parties, it is argued, can contribute greatly to the development of skills and strategies which will help teachers in their management of change.

However, in Chapter 2, p.75-6, when discussing the problem of teacher isolation, it was pointed out that some of the apparent solutions which involve collaboration between teaching colleagues can be problematic. For instance, Hargreaves and Fullan (1992:223) point to institutions with "balkanised teacher cultures" where teachers only collaborate with chosen individuals, while other writers point to the potential dangers of "groupthink". Indeed, in informal interviews with teachers during this research project, even the term "collaboration" sometimes produced a negative reaction, suggesting to certain individuals support for communist hegemonic power and thus reviving bad memories. (Perhaps "collegiality" would be a more acceptable term).

If productive and supportive relationships are to be developed between teaching colleagues to help overcome shared problems associated with change, then more positive attitudes will need to prevail. In this respect, the rest of the evidence to be gathered from the data is a little more encouraging, with teachers such as E. (p.167) emphasizing the importance of not just teaching for oneself and describing her gradual change in becoming more positive about sharing ideas between colleagues. In the case of her school, such co-operation is important since several younger teachers (such as A., p.193) sometimes feel demotivated and lacking in regular support. In another school, B. (p.177) also emphasizes how much native speaker teachers can

help their Slovak colleagues - not so much in terms of teaching ideas, but in terms of language support, acting as a readily-available linguistic resource.

Sometimes, when there is evidence of growing solidarity and a supportive atmosphere between teaching colleagues in one school subject such as English, there can be a perceived lack of support between teachers of different subjects, or between higher authorities in the school and groups of teachers who support each other. In the case of the Dolny Kubin *gymnazium*, journal entries (p.409 & 412) show that there appears to be a communication gap between the Head of Department and most of the other English teachers, which is most likely caused by the simple fact that they are divided between two buildings. The consequences of this physical separation are fewer opportunities for the Head to talk to his colleagues, which, unfortunately, is easily interpreted by them as a lack of interest on his part. In the same school, the same group of teachers also feel that their subject area is neglected by the school authorities, with T. (p.163) in particular lamenting the fact that the special needs of English teaching are not recognized.

When problems such as these occur, communication is obviously important, but to an equal extent so is *articulation* (see quotation from Nicholls 1997:49 in Chapter 2, p.77). In other words, teachers need to make public their concerns, using whatever forum is available. It is interesting that at different levels, several interviewees mentioned the importance of having the courage to publicize the most problematic aspects of change. In the context of an individual school, E. (p.163) talks about being "strong enough to fight for one's opinions"; in a national context Tandlichova (p.138) emphasizes the need for the teaching profession as a whole to be "more courageous" when articulating problems to the Ministry of Education. She suggests ELT conferences (possibly organized by SAUA and SATE, the Slovak English language teachers' unions) as a means of achieving this.

Tandlichova (ibid.) also stresses the key importance of *Metodicke Centra* in supporting teachers facing the problematic effects of change. She sees them as "the

arms which are in various parts of Slovakia", providing the kind of support at a regional level, which national organizations would find it hard to achieve. In each *Metodicke Centrum* Slovak teacher trainers in each subject can provide support for local teachers; in the case of foreign language teaching native speaker teacher trainers often work together with Slovak colleagues. But Tandlichova believes strongly in Slovak solutions for Slovak problems, and that it should be the task of the local teacher trainers, and not the native speakers, to take the initiative in providing the bulk of the support.

I would argue strongly that working within a well-established institution such as a *Metodicke Centrum* or a university foreign language department, which is accepted as a traditional component of the education system, and which caters for the needs of teachers of all subject areas rather than just English, will increase the likelihood of success of these Slovak teacher trainers and their native speaker colleagues. The alternative route, favoured by many of the region's ELT projects (see N. Butler interview pp.333-4), involving key 'change agents' working from outside the educational system, has its merits in efficiency seen through various quantifiable measures (such as the number of institutional contacts made), but is seriously disadvantaged by its self-enforced distance from the cultural and ideological educational traditions of the country in which it seeks to achieve success. If the ultimate goal is sustainable systematic support at every level to help teachers counteract the effects of change, then working from within the present educational system , with all of its merits and demerits, making use of human and non-human resources which are already available, seems to be the most practical route to follow, taking into consideration the immediacy of the problems faced by teachers emerging from the research data.

Finally, researchers (some of whom can be teachers themselves) have a role in providing support for the management of change. While teaching colleagues, teacher trainers and institutions such as the *Metodicke Centra* can each contribute something different towards the development of supportive and productive relationships which

are mutally beneficial, researchers can also assist in this process, providing the means of reflecting on and articulating the kind of problems which English language teachers currently face, and through the evidence which they collect helping to convince higher authorities of the reality of such problems. This has been one aim of this particular research project, and it is hoped that the close co-operation which it has entailed among many different Slovak and non-Slovak individuals and institutions has contributed in a small way towards the joint development of possible solutions to the problems posed by rapid educational change. Chapter 9 will examine the feasibility of putting into practice some of the ideas generated by the data from this case study report in the near future.

CHAPTER 9: RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

In the aftermath of the 'velvet revolution' the new president of the Czech Republic and writer, Vaclav Havel wrote:

The most basic sphere of concern is schooling. Everything else depends on that. What will our schools be like? I think that in ten years they should be fully reformed and consolidated. The point, understandably is not just the reconstruction of school buildings or the supply of computers and new textbooks. The most important thing is a new concept of education. At all levels, schools must cultivate a spirit of free and independent thinking in the students ..... (Havel 1991a:117)

The optimistic message contained in such comments and in much of Havel's writings at that time must have helped to inspire many teachers in the former Czechoslovakia, who were tired of a state apparatus which was seen to dispense a rigidly-prescribed syllabus for all subjects. However, now that very nearly ten years have elapsed since Havel assumed the presidency of his country, and at a time when the euphoria has given way to a more pragmatic assessment of what can be achieved with the resources available, it has begun to seem that freedom and independence have brought with them new problems and unaccustomed pressures. The evidence of this particular research project, detailed in Chapters 4-8, has provided a good illustration of this, revealing how teachers in different schools have had to negotiate a difficult period of change, initially in order to try to live up to the high expectations created by the immediate aftermath of 1989, and subsequently to modify those expectations in line with the realities of post-communist society. Their voices provide a range of different perspectives on the effects of change - that of the basic school teacher, the secondary school teacher, the young newly-qualified teacher, the older and very experienced teacher, the teacher of other subjects forced to requalify to teach English. When the voices of Slovak and outside educational specialists are added, the result is a very full account of the complexities of change in a specific educational context, but one which, I would argue, also has considerable significance for teachers and teacher educators elsewhere.

Specific findings emerging from this joint account of educational change are as follows:

(i). The teaching of English in Slovak state schools has been significantly influenced by several different cultural and ideological traditions, some of which preceded communism and have survived it. As far as cultural traditions are concerned, the most influential involve the idea of the teacher as 'teacher scholar' , almost with the status of a language 'expert'. Before 1989 the authority of the teacher was also backed up by the central authority of the relevant arm of the Education Ministry, the SPU, which prescribed the language teaching syllabus for all schools. After 1989, both the teacher's authority (by students and parents) and that of the SPU (by teachers) are increasingly being questioned, a fact which it is particularly difficult for older, more experienced teachers to come to terms with. As schools seek to decide their own language teaching syllabus, the cultural practice of 'teaching only from the textbook', still the norm in many other subject areas, is also increasingly being rejected.

With respect to ideological traditions, the broad categories described by Clark (1987) can be roughly applied to the current situation in Slovakia, representing three conflicting discourses that appear throughout the data. A classical humanist approach is represented through the survival of 'traditional' practice which originated in the pre-war years, and which emphasizes the importance of the transmission of linguistic knowledge, using grammar-translation teaching methods to achieve its ends ; a reconstructionist approach characterized educational methods imposed by the Soviet Union, with the emphasis on the political education of the citizen, and of which remnants survive via coursebook materials written under communism; finally, a progressivist approach, stressing 'whole-person education' and learner independence, is inherent in the vast majority of imported teaching materials. To most teachers the change process involves a tension between progressivist and classical humanist ideals, with the reconstructionist ideology being considered very much a thing of the past. The data shows that, rather than uncritically accepting the 'student-centred' communicative methodology strongly associated with

progressivism, some experienced teachers have been working towards a balanced approach to acceptable language teaching practice, which holds in esteem elements of both progressivism and classical humanism. Thus, more 'traditional' teaching approaches, involving translation and use of the mother tongue and valuing the special role of the non-native speaker teacher, are not being abandoned.

(ii). The track record of English language teacher education projects in Slovakia (and therefore, most probably, in the rest of the region) has been mixed because, while outside organizations such as the British Council and USIS have made significant contributions in terms of supplying both human and non-human resources, at the same time there has been a failure to take into consideration the kind of educational traditions discussed in the previous paragraphs. This has perhaps been a consequence of such organizations favouring a consultancy-based model for managing educational change, by which key 'change agents', often working from outside the educational system , provide input, which is then disseminated by local counterparts while the 'change agent' moves on. This strategy provides a convenient way of quantifying success, in terms of institutions contacted, institutions collaborating, number of counterparts trained, and so on. But finding suitable quality measures for such interventions is much more problematic. The evidence from this research project indicates that a much more effective way of promoting and managing sustainable educational change within a project context might be small-scale operations working within the educational system rather than outside it.

(iii). The research data also shows that the support provided by ELT publishers for their products could be greatly improved. While there is little evidence to suggest the kind of deliberate covert 'educational imperialism' postulated by Phillipson (1992), it is nevertheless true that ELT publishers have been instrumental in restricting the freedom of choice which Slovak teachers aspire to, by using their power and influence within the Ministry of Education to ensure that teachers will be persuaded to use their titles. Commercial interests have also meant that, very often, particular coursebooks have been

aggressively marketed, not because of their degree of appropriacy for the local market, but because these titles are not achieving the desired turnover elsewhere. As far as direct support offered to teachers is concerned, there has also been little attempt to tailor this to the local situation, with many Slovak teachers having to rely exclusively on international editions of coursebook teacher's books. They are thus expected to manage for themselves any problems which arise as a result of tensions between the coursebook's underlying methodology and established local educational traditions.

(iv). Teachers' strong motivation for educational change is clearly revealed by the research project data. However, the evidence points to a clear rejection of the idea that younger teachers, who have only experienced 'traditional' approaches to language teaching as learners, and who have a more pronounced 'western' outloook, are more enthusiastic about change. What is sometimes seen as 'resistance to change' among older, more experienced teachers, could more accurately be interpreted as a willingness to subject new materials and new approaches to healthy critical appraisal. Such teachers are therefore less prone to accept change for its own sake, and are more likely to demand the right not to be rushed into change through impulsive decision-making.

Focus group and school visit journal data also reveal that older, more experienced Slovak teachers are much better equipped, in terms of skills and strategies, to manage change successfully. Their ability to anticipate the kind of problem areas detailed in Chapter 8.3. is much more acute than that of their less experienced colleagues. In spite of the supposed prescriptiveness of the communist years, they also appear to have a more flexible attitude towards adapting new materials. In this respect there was a remarkable contrast between the two *gymnazia* visited as part of this project. In the first of these, a very inexperienced teaching staff had become heavily dependent on imported coursebook teacher's books for their lesson planning at every level, giving rise to real concern that such dependency would lead to an inability to develop their own teaching skills - almost a process of 'de-skilling'. In the second school, a highly experienced teaching staff

seemed to have the expertise required to combine the approach adopted for teaching communication skills through imported coursebook materials with the more 'traditional' grammar-translation approach needed to prepare students for examinations, and expected by the rest of the Slovak education system. When we consider their apparent subservience to a particular type of methodological orthodoxy it can be argued that the young teachers in the Dolny Kubin *gymnazium* are at present no better off (or arguably even worse off) than they would have been under the previous educational regime.

Having considered this summary of the main findings, there arises the question of the relevance of this particular case study to teachers, teacher educators and project planners in other parts of the world. While I do not claim that generalizations which are automatically applicable to other teaching contexts can be made from the data, I would argue that the findings detailed above do have considerable significance both within the East and Central European region and beyond. At a regional level, insights into the particular problems faced by teachers in post-communist countries include:-

- the need to encourage a greater critical awareness, among all teachers, but especially among younger, less experienced teaching professionals. To this might be added a need to revive the spirit of dissent that somehow survived under even the most repressive communist regimes, and whose vital importance has been eloquently expressed by Havel (1991b:127) and others. This research data seems to indicate that, in an educational context, dissenting voices are *still* needed to prevent the uncritical acceptance of a new (and sometimes inappropriate) educational orthodoxy. "Free and independent thinking" (see Havel 1991a: 177), whether among teachers or their students, cannot flourish in an atmosphere of resignation and acquiescence in the face of change.

- the need to raise awareness of methodological developments taking place within local and regional as well as British/American contexts. This can be combined with a greater emphasis on the importance of successfully integrating new ideas into existing educational practice in the context of pre-service training.

- the need for ELT projects funded from outside the region to be tailored to local needs, paying close attention, as suggested by Butler (p.338), to local requests rather than just concentrating on prescribing solutions for perceived problem areas. In other words, consultation with local practitioners should take place at the project planning stage, not just when evaluation exercises are conducted.

- the need for publishers to produce materials which are appropriate to the local context, which provide adequate support for local users, and which can be supplemented by special support programmes for those using the new materials.

Looking to the future, putting such ideas into practice will require close co-operation between Slovak teachers, teacher trainers, university departments, materials writers, publishers and project planners. The feasibility of achieving such co-operation will depend on many different factors, among them the desire to participate in collaborative development schemes involving both more experienced and less experienced Slovak teachers (along with *Metodicke Centra* and university department teacher trainers). Working towards the upgrading of the status of the teaching profession will also be a key requirement, which can best be achieved by articulating the problems which teachers currently face within Ministries of Education and publicizing professional success in the outside world, as recommended by Tandlichova (p.307). The evidence shows that the more teachers feel respected, the more positive they will feel about their own professional development, and the greater will be their willingness to support others.

Educational researchers also have a role to play in this joint process. For this particular research project, strong collaboration with Slovak researchers has been crucial at every level; the research findings have emerged thanks to the contributions made by Slovak focus group interviewers, translators, providers of statistical data, conference paper presenters, writers and administrators. Focus group data in particular has been collected with collaborative aims in mind; the same data which has been put forward in this thesis to illustrate the problematic effects of change will, in the context of teacher development programmes run by two Slovak university departments, (and with the permission of the participating teachers themselves) act as a source of input for the next generation of English language teachers. Co-operative research of this nature can be shown to be highly effective at a practical level, as a means of suggesting solutions to problem areas within a specific educational context.

Such research can also have another significant benefit - it can provide an opportunity for teachers within a specific context to communicate their experience of managing change to a wider audience - even outside the immediate region. It seems very likely that many English language teachers and teacher educators around the world will identify closely with the opinions expressed by different protagonists in this case study. As the global demand for English teaching continues to expand, more and more primary and secondary school teachers will find themselves in a situation where they must successfully manage change, reconciling the tensions caused by conflicting cultural and ideological traditions within education. The voices of Slovak teachers describing their experience of the management of rapid educational change can therefore have a wider resonance - whether it is G's description of the strategies which she has developed for materials adaptation (p.173), J's deliberations concerning the suitability of coursebook topics (p.198) or T's mixing of inductive and deductive approaches to grammar teaching (p.207).

In this thesis I have argued that the sudden demise of the region's communist regimes and the power vacuum which this created has provided a unique opportunity to study the process of rapid change in an educational context. An account of how Slovak teachers have coped with the unexpected challenges which have faced them, and their journey from prescribed certainty into uncertainty needed to be undertaken - firstly because the particular set of historical circumstances will almost certainly never be repeated in the future, and secondly because most previous studies of educational change in the field of language teaching have definitely failed to present the perspective of the language teacher. Through this case study, with the help and collaboration of Slovak colleagues, I have sought to address this deficiency by presenting the voices of teachers in the process of managing change. It is to be hoped that, through this and other similar accounts in the future, the study of educational change can continue to advance a little further.

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING COURSEBOOK REFERENCE LIST

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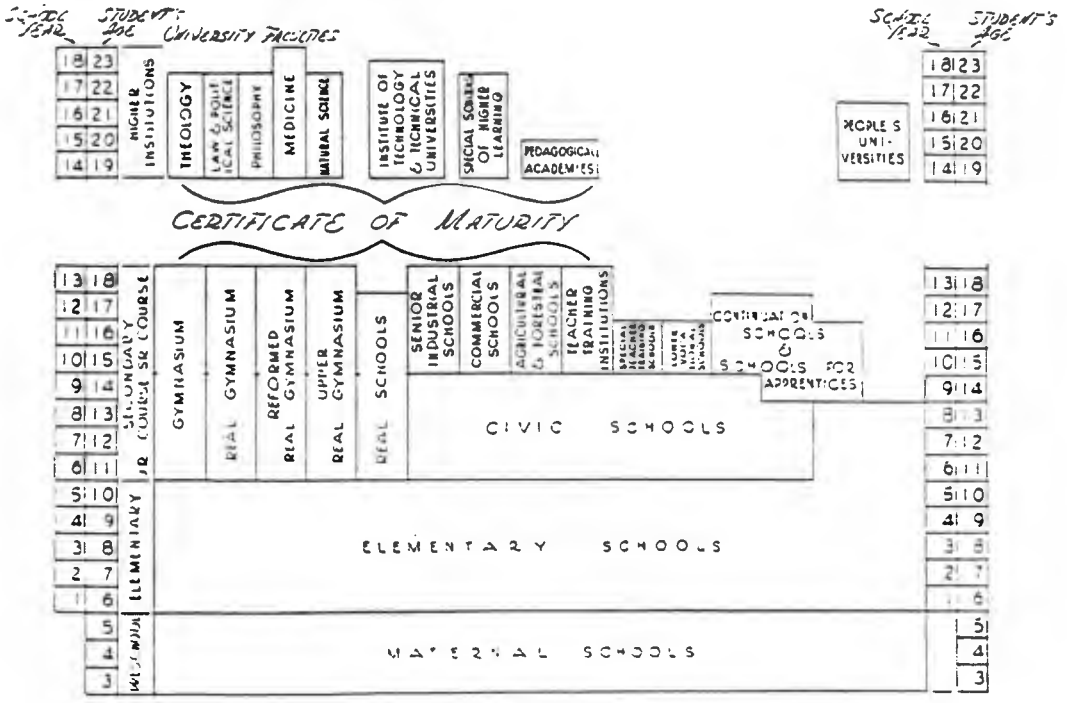
CULTURE, IDEOLOGY & EDUCATIONAL CHANGE:
THE CASE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN SLOVAKIA

APPENDIX LIST

APPENDIX A :

ORGANIZATION OF THE SLOVAK

EDUCATION SYSTEM BEFORE 1939



The Czechoslovak school system. Types and levels of educational institutions.

TUROSIENSKI, S. (1935)

U.S. DEPT. OF THE INTERIOR

"EDUCATION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA"

APPENDIX B: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE ON COURSEBOOK USE

* This questionnaire has been designed to collect information on English Language teaching materials currently being used in Slovak schools
* Please complete this questionnaire if you are a part-time or full-time English Language Teacher with your main employment in a Basic or Secondary School in Slovakia.
* Thank you very much for your co-operation which will help us provide more support for English language teachers in the future.

Instructions:-
1. Please try to answer as many of the questions as you can
2. In order to incorporate your opinions we need your reply before 30th June 1997.
3. Return your completed questionnaire to Eva Homolova, MC, Banska Bystrica

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Section A

01 How many hours of English do you teach per week?

0 - 6 ( ) 7 - 12 ( ) 13 - 21 ( ) more than 21 ( )

02 What age groups do you teach ? (tick all those appropriate)

Basic School grades 1-4 ( ) BS grades 5-9 ( ) Secondary School ( )

03 Which coursebooks do you use on a regular basis? (tick all those appropriate)

AJ pre ZS/Tandlichova	( )	AJ pre SS/Repka	( )
AJ pre samoukov	( )		
Discoveries	( )	Project English	( )
Stepping Stones	( )	Toy Box	( )
Chatterbox	( )	Tip Top	( )
Your Ticket To English	( )	Splash	( )
You and Me	( )	Trio	( )
Jacaranda	( )	Wow	( )
Flying Colours	( )	Blueprint	( )
Strategies	( )	Street wise	( )
Streamline	( )	Grapevine	( )
Fast Forward	( )	Look Ahead	( )
Cambridge English Course	( )	Headway	( )
Language in Use	( )	Hotline	( )

Other (please specify) .....

Section B

If you ticked *more than one coursebook* in question 03, please answer question 04.
If not, go straight to question 05.

04 Which single coursebook do you use most? .....

05 Do you use the audio cassette materials which accompany coursebook units?

With every unit ( ) With most units ( ) Occasionally ( ) Never ( )

06 Do you use the teacher's book to help you prepare coursebook units?

For every unit ( ) For most units ( ) Occasionally ( ) Never ( )

07 How much of this coursebook will you use/have you used in your teaching?

Every unit ( ) Parts of every unit ( ) Selected units ( ) Parts of selected units ( )

08 Do you prepare your own materials or activities to accompany the coursebook? Which?

Grammar exercises ( ) Vocabulary Exercises ( ) Writing activities ( )
Visual aids ( ) Reading texts ( ) Tests ( ) Speaking activities ( )

Other (please specify) .....

09 Do you have any comments to make concerning the suitability of this book for your sts?

.....

.....

.....

Section C

10 Are you male or female? .....

11 Which age group do you belong to?

18 - 25 ( ) 26-30 ( ) 31 - 40 ( ) 41 - 50 ( ) 50+ ( )

12 Are you a native speaker of English? .....

13 In which town or village is your school situated? .....

14 In which category would you place your school?

Basic school ( ) 8 year gymnazium ( ) Gymnazium ( )
Secondary technical ( ) SOU Apprentice ( ) Business school ( )
Hotel school ( )

Other (please specify) .....

Section D

15 What teaching qualifications do you hold?

Accreditation/State exams ( )
Requalifying diploma completed or in progress ( )
Teaching diploma completed or in progress ( )

Other (please specify) .....

16 How many years' general teaching experience do you have?

0-1 ( ) 2-3 ( ) 4-6 ( ) 7-10 ( ) 11-20 ( ) 20+ ( )

17 How many years' English language teaching experience do you have?

0-1 ( ) 2-3 ( ) 4-6 ( ) 7-10 ( ) 11-20 ( ) 20+ ( )

Section E (optional)

18 Would you be willing to be interviewed concerning the materials and methods which you use in your English language teaching classes? If 'yes', please write your name, full home or school address and telephone number:

.....

.....

Thank you for your help with this questionnaire. The results will be published by the MC, Banska Bystrica and the information sent to schools in the autumn of 1997.

D.Thomas May 1997

APPENDIX C: LESSON OBSERVATION SHEET FOR SCHOOL VISITS

Stage of the lesson, activities & materials used	Problem points & Teacher solutions	Post-lesson teacher comments

APPENDIX D: NAMES & ADDRESSES OF COLLABORATING INSTITUTIONS

Dept.of English and American studies,
Faculty of Arts, Comenius University,
Gondova 2, 81801, Bratislava,
Slovakia.

Dept.of English and American Studies,
Faculty of Humanities, Matej Bel University,
Tajovskeho 40, 97401, Banska Bystrica,
Slovakia.

Dept. of English language and literature,
Faculty of Humanities and Natural Science,
Presov University,
Ul. 17 novembra 1,
08001 Presov, Slovakia.

Metodicke Centrum,
Horna 97,
97546 Banska Bystrica,
Slovakia.

British Council,
Panska 17,
P.O. Box 68,
81499, Bratislava, Slovakia

APPENDIX E : TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR H.WIDDOWSON (01.07.97.)

Dt: What are your thoughts on the track record of English language teaching projects in E/Central Europe since 1989?

As you will know, in the early 90s there were plans made available by the British Government called know-how funds. And they were administered by the ODA and projects were set up in various Eastern European countries .... Central and Eastern European countries which involved the British Council as the kind of language teaching institution, I suppose ..... the official government institution concerned with English language teaching. And there were quite a lot of people recruited from Britain to take up posts as basically advisors for Czechoslovakia and elsewhere. In Romania a whole project was set up ... textbook writing projects, teacher training projects. And I'd been asked by the Council to do brief consultancy visits..... I did one to Romania and to Hungary, and I spent one day .... only one day actually .... one day and a half, I think it was, in Czechoslovakia as it then was. And there was a meeting, a seminar bringing together all of the British Council recruited people and their counterparts.Were you present there?

Dt: I wasn't present. That was about a year before I actually went out there

Was it 1982?

Dt: Yes. It must have been.

So, I was asked to address this distinguished group and ditto informally ..... and pointed out how important I thought it was to recognize that in the developments should be some sense, if not internally-generated, then internally-ratified, that the tradition of ... existing traditions of scholarship and education needed to be respected, known about and

respected..... And that in the past in my judgement there had been rather too much of people coming in from outside 'bringing in the good news'. So that essentially this whole business of development was a reciprocal process and the ultimate arbiters were people who were receiving rather than those who were giving ..... arbiters of how effective this was. And I think I mentioned also something that I've talked about in a number of other places , that it wasn't enough to simply ensure the agreement or connivance or even the wholesale support of local people, because clearly they were going to support something which was apparently to their advantage. They were not likely to raise critical voices against an organization which was bringing them much-needed help and assistance financially and the opportunity to do something different.

The trouble was of course they brought a package. They were not .....For them this was an opportunity to think about what they were doing, to establish new procedures, new ideas, take a new look at what they were doing, and get finance, much-needed finance to do this. So they were unlikely to raise any dissident voices, but dissident voices, it seemed to me, were necessary and, in a way, one of the functions of the British Council was to create a climate of dissidence, and not just come in for agreement. And that naturally the British Council were continually trying to get a conciliatory and conniving ethos, and that paradoxically, it was likely it seemed to me to lead to ultimate failure. Because what would happen was that people would then accept those ideas and procedures, even those which ultimately they did not believe in.....because they were so willing to cooperate. And my point was that one of the functions of the external influence was to create a climate of critical appraisal. It was not enough for people to ..... for the Council to say "Let so-and-so speak for the Czechs, or the Romanians", and then you'd hear of course the Czech and the Romanian voice saying "Yes, yes. We are very grateful to the British Council ..... I wonder what it is ..... and yes, yes, you know ..... wonderful, wonderful, wonderful". Of course they are going to say that. What else do you expect?

So, anyway, my talk touched upon the whole problematic question of contact. And I did

see it as problematic in a way I thought the Council didn't. Having seen projects in the past founder on precisely this kind of lack of awareness of the critical conditions for reception, so to speak ..... there are many examples of it in the past .... I was anxious to make that point. Afterwards, I talked with a number of the teachers. Some of them were rather taken aback , the British teachers

Dt: Were they all native speaker lecturers?

Yes. Er, no. Present at the seminar were also their local counterparts, Czechoslovak counterparts. And at lunch (or dinner, I'm not sure which it was..... I think lunch) I was sitting at the table with two or three very distinguished Czechoslovak scholars, Firbas was one . And as I was sitting at this end of the table and Firbas was there with a couple of other distinguished academics, two teachers came up to me and said in a way that they thought my remarks uncalled for, because I was questioning essentially their expertise, which of course I was. Because it's not enough to have imported expertise, you've got to have expertise which is tempered by local knowledge. That's what expertise means if you're in the development business. So I said that it seemed to me that anyone coming to Czechoslovakia needs to know the tradition of scholarship and education of this country. After all this is a country that is well-known for its linguistic scholarship. They looked blank. So I said "Have you ever heard of the Prague School?" And they said, "Prague School? Where's that?", thinking that it was a Prague school rather like International House or the Pilgrim's School of English. So I said: "The Prague School is a school of linguistics, a school of thought. Ever heard of Jakobsen? Mathesius? Danes? Firbas ....."

Dt: ..... who was sitting next to them. Oh dear.

He wasn't in on this conversation. He was talking to somebody else. "Never heard of them". So I said to them, "Well it does seem to me that if you come to Czechoslovakia to talk about English, the teaching of English, that you should know something about

scholars who have an international reputation in the study of English ..... and not only English ..... French, German, Czech and so on." The Prague School of linguistics was a major scholarly force until the 40s and 50s until ..... indeed it tended to .... well it disappeared, it vanished like so much else .....

And I was extremely annoyed and disturbed by the fact that they had not bothered .... or no one had briefed them .... no one mentioned, presumably, to any of these British Council teachers that there was a tradition of scholarship already about English language in general, and about pedagogy. Because the Prague School ..... they were also interested in language and literature .... but also were interested in language and language tradition. And generally, it seemed to me then and it still does, that this was symptomatic actually of a general assumption that English teaching methodology of the kind that people picked up on their UCLES courses or RSA, or teaching in Canterbury or Brighton or even indeed teaching overseas, was somehow different, was closed off as a separate area of expertise .... and not connected with other traditions of language education or language study, or education. So that people would go into various countries with this rather superficial set of techniques and monkey tricks, very often, and would sort of suggest that this was the way you taught English ..... that this was the good news. And I think ..... I still think very much that a great ..... we might not have known much about it ..... that there *were* things going on over the past 20 years or 40 years. It wasn't as if all thought stopped. It wasn't as if behind the Iron Curtain all was benighted.... It wasn't that there was a kind of vast 50 year hiatus of ignorance and incompetence. There were people thinking and there were people studying. There were extensive enquiries into language and a whole load of other things.

Dt: Do you think that some of these have been significant for language teaching?

Well, no .... because I don't know what they are. You occasionally got echoes of work going on the other side of the Iron Curtain ..... from Czechoslovakia or ...

Dt: How about through Jakobsen? Because he came to the USA ....

Jakobsen then came .... went to the United States and became an American scholar. He took with him a lot of .... the breadth of knowledge and enquiry that he had practised with his other Prague School colleagues. But once in the States he pursued his language and literary studies and he did a whole range of very interesting work. But he was very much an independent figure really, Jakobsen, I think. There's no School of Jakobsen. He came from the Prague School and with him he brought a certain attitude to scholarship. But there were no followers of Jakobsen as there were followers of Chomsky ....

Dt: How would you understand the Prague School as being a distinctive school of thought, as opposed to other schools of linguistics?

Its main interest was in what they called functional sentence .... what Firbas and others have called functional sentence perspective and information structure. They were interested in ..... one of the main interests was in the way in which the structure of ..... linguistic structures, which you can describe in terms of sentence constituents, represented organization of information. ..... And how a shift of constituents of the sentence would have involved a reorganization of the information, and therefore at the mode in which you process that information. So they were interested in, if you like, the rhetorical effects, the communicative effects if you will, of various structural changes in sentences. And they talked about "theme and rheme" and *(inaudible)* and things of this kind, and very much the kind of thing which Halliday took up and developed. And although there's an affinity between Halliday's work and the Prague School, I'm not sure .... I don't know the extent to which Halliday, as it were, borrowed from the Prague School. Certainly his work and that of Danes and Firbas are close. They were also interested in literary theory, so that they were very much concerned with the language of literature .....well stylistics really ... stylistics ...

Dt: Is there a possibility that they 'invented' (in inverted commas) contrastive analysis? Because they seem to have been doing it a lot earlier ....

They did. Yes. But again... as my understanding is, they were interested ..... they did a lot of work which contrasted German, Czech and English . Information structure ..... again information structure. And again their interest really .... mainly was in thematic structure and the contrastive statements they made were about ways in which the languages organize information differences, order them .... the potential languages had for different organization of information. And that was interestingly different from the contrastive studies that were carried out, for example, in the structural ...the American Bloomfieldian structural tradition, which was much more the ..... what Halliday would call the transitivity and mood systems of the language. If you think of Halliday's threefold distinction of transitivity , mood and theme .... the transitivity systems are those which had to do with processes expressed by the clause, participants and processes .... transitivity. And the mood had to do with the interpersonal markings of sentences, modality and things of that ..... text modality. And what the structuralists were mainly interested in were sentences as encodings of transitivity and mood. They were talking about the encodings of various kinds of processes, the encodings of tense, the encodings of modality and things of this kind. And what the Prague School was much more interested in I think was the contrastive study of theme systems, that part of the Hallidayan system ..... how information gets organized, propositional organization ... that's what they were principally interested in. So that I think was .... In a way, you see, you could say they were talking about communicative grammar already. They were talking about ....

Dt: This is what I wanted to ask you about. The word 'communicative' keeps creeping in. Is it possible that they set the ball rolling for communicative language teaching?

Well I think it's certainly the case that they were looking for motivations for syntactic structure. And the point about the structuralists in the American tradition, is that they

weren't interested in the functional motivation of form ..... you had sentences, you had systems, you had rules for generating sentences, structures of noun phrases and verb phrases and so on. And there were functions within the language ..... so within these encodings you had functions like subject or object and so on. But what I think the Prague School did was to introduce the idea of the external functions really ... how the structuring of the sentences was motivated by a need for information processing of the different ... of various kinds. So that they were interested in what the sentence told you about the way in which information was organized.

Dt: Are we talking about register?

No. I think that they were also interested in that idea about varieties of English as well ... that is true. But this is more general across all registers ..... has to do with the organization of sentences as functionally motivated, as motivated by the need to organize information in a certain way. You don't get in structuralism ..... all the way through beyond Chomsky ..... you get no discussion of why sentences are as they are.

Dt: So would you mean something like why the passive is used?

Yes. I mean the passive ..... That's right. Instead of saying ..... If you're only interested in using Halliday's terms 'intransitivity' and 'theme'..... then you would say that here we have a passive sentence and here we have an active sentence, and they are formally related. And we can transform one into the other in terms of shifting of noun phrases, the changing of the verb phrase, the alteration of tense and things of this kind. These were purely formal operations. No one was asking why do we use an active rather than a passive .... and what happens to the information. If you do get a topicalization or a thematization, why do you get that, and why does this provide you with different means of organizing your thoughts ... or propositions. And that I think was very much the Prague School interest .....

Dt: Thank you. That's very useful ... it's given me lots of ideas. I've got a question now about educational traditions. In your opinion, how would you characterize the educational traditions of that region and Britain? How would they contrast with each other?

Well again, I don't have enough experience really of these places to be able to say ... I can only give an impression. And I suppose the impression would be that there is there ..... and I suppose you might say that this is part of the associated political ethos ..... there is much more respect for established scholarship than there is in this country. What I think the West has questioned over the last two decades is the whole notion of authority, and the emphasis on individual rights, and choice and freedom of choice, and freedom generally to do what you as an individual wish to do. And the repercussions on education of course in the shift to learner-centredness and the assumption that there is no reliable accepted way to conform to ..... that people conform to their own ideas and are free to have various notions about almost anything. So this has undermined the whole notion that there is a tradition which you trust in ..... a tradition of scholarship and belief. What we've been doing for the past 30 years is questioning the authority of scholarship and belief. What I think in Central Europe has happened is that there hasn't been the same questioning. There has been questioning of course of authority and belief .... if there weren't there would not ever have been any kind of dissension at all. Clearly there has been dissension, but I think it's been within a framework of respect for authority, for authoritative knowledge. What they've been against is *authoritarian* belief, but not *authoritative* belief. And I also find the same thing true actually in Vienna, in Austria, I think in the same thing ..... that there is as yet, one might say, the traditions of established scholarship have not been completely undermined. There are signs that it's changing, and no doubt need to change. I'm not saying that entrenched scholarship should always be respected without being subjected to critical evaluation .... of course it must be. But I have a strong feeling that the traditions will last much longer than we think. Which is again why, it seems to me ... it is only prudent, if nothing else to .... not to undermine, or to appear to threaten, or to undervalue these scholarly structures in these countries, but to

work with them. And I think that mistakes were made when, again, these bright-eyed people came in .... experts in the teaching of English ..... and offended a lot of the established university people with of course ....with proposals reducing the university courses from four to three .... fast-track courses and things of this kind ..... Which were I think in many cases very insensitively proposed.

Dt: I would welcome your comments on that, because that has caused a lot of problems.....

Well, it's very insensitive. These are people who believe in scholarship. And although you may say .... you know, point the finger .... and say that this is absurd pedantic scholarship ... four dreary years when an English teacher only needs three, or even two, or perhaps one ..... they just need to be trained in certain basic techniques. Whatever the justification for such a policy in terms of ..... and I think it's a very questionable assumption anyway ..... even if there were grounds for putting this to the case, you could prepare good English teachers in a year .... it's highly insensitive to propose that in defiance of the established pattern of university education. So I think an attempt to understand where ... what the traditions of scholarship are ..... and the fact that they are quite deeply entrenched and subject to a much higher respect than we are accustomed to here . So I think this came across I would think to many people in East Europe as being brash, irresponsible, unscholarly people who were coming to question their autonomy .... sorry, to question authority ....because they've been accustomed to doing that for the past 40 years or so.

Dt: After 1989, that must have been a tremendous shock on both sides.

Well, there was a shock I think on one side rather than the other. I mean, the shock I think was inflicted by the outsiders coming in.

Dt: Do you think it's just a one-way process? Or do we feel their influence?

I think that the result..... my impression may again be quite wrong ..... this resulted in frustration on the part of many of the British people going in there, who were rather sort of impatient and intolerant of the traditions they found there. And of course one of the .... for me one of the interesting aspects of this was that in some sense the intolerance was already tolerable. I mean it was justified by the fact that you could put it all down to the fact that these were communists, who were obviously wrong. We did exactly the same .... in a way it's the same phenomena as you find when we set up .... by 'we' I mean the British Council, ODA and so on .... set up projects in Saudi Arabia or in India, where again there was insensitivity to local conditions and traditions. Then you could say, well we ought to respect the traditions of Hinduism or Islam or whatever. These are respectable things to respect. But when you get into East Europe in 1989, where everyone is trying to enlist on our side of things, where there was a general assumption that this was a rotten regime, totally failed and totally discredited, and the people of course themselves were only too willing for a change .... it became not only a duty but a positive pleasure as Lady Bracknell put it to say "This is a terrible regime! The last 40 years have been dreadful. Out with it!". And of course you swept away everything, because you condemned everything under the name of totalitarianism, suppression and so on. And this is where the .... my view would be that proper authority and improper authority are confused. So that an authoritative ..... someone with authority was seen as being authoritarian and not authoritative. And I think that there's a good deal of what is quite legitimately authoritative about the traditions in university and elsewhere in these countries. But of course, any recognition of authority smacked of the previous regime. That was I think the difficulty. So everything conspired to undermine everything that had happened, everything. And I think some of the awful consequences of this are made clear. I mean you graft essentially an ethos of greed onto people who have been deprived and you get this awful spectacle ... this sort of short-term grasping for some immediate gratification, whether it's education or something else.

Dt: Would you characterize publishers and organizations such as the Council in these terms?

Yes. I think a lot was opportunist. I think that it takes a long time, or longer time anyway to try and understand who it is you're dealing with. It's much easier to cast them in the role of consumers, and to produce something which is appealing. And so what I think the Council and publishers and everyone else did in those heady days, seeing the economic opportunities, as well as the opportunity to make quick socio-political pointscoring, simply exploited the situation, I think. And it was a bit like selling shoddy goods ..... selling beads to the natives, who were desperate for something new, who had anyway been persuaded over 40 years, that everything from the West was great, was terrific ..... who were persuaded .... and this was again I think an awful con ... that a free market economy and democratic values were the same thing. The two things went hand in hand. You can't have one without the other.

Dt: Are you suggesting that people are genuinely being exploited, or are they in turn taking what they want?

Well this is a very interesting ..... This comes back to what I was saying before about connivance. You can connive in your own ruin. This is essentially the notion of hegemony, isn't it? Although it's a very questionable notion in many ways, one can see that in some cases it explains what goes on. As we did, I think .... by 'we' I mean the Brits ... in our field of English language teaching .....We go into, say, Czechoslovakia, and you say : "Look we've got know-how funds. And these funds enable us to come and set up resource centres. We can get people in as advisors to universities free. We can provide so many ..... "

(Tape stops at this point: roughly 10 minutes of further discussion of this and related points cut.)

APPENDIX F: TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH K. DOVCIAK (13.11.97)

Dt: In your opinion how has English language teaching changed since 1989 in Slovakia? Do you identify any trends?

Well, the situation has changed very much .... dramatic change in fact because before 1989, the contexts were so limited that this influenced also the methodology. We were studying foreign languages, learning foreign languages, in a way they used sometimes to learn Greek or Latin, like dead languages. Because you had a book .... usually you started from the text. Well, there were recordings of course, but the level of them was relative. And the teachers who were teaching English at secondary schools ... they themselves had not been trained. So the spoken media, more or less in .....again their teachers had been prepared in a sort of way that Latin or Greek used to be.

Dt: Did you have in-service teacher training under communism or was there workshops for teachers, language teachers of some sort?

Well, perhaps again, to give you some background from my experience ..... I'm not a trained teacher. I studied in Prague and it was a specialization in translation and interpreting. But I started because there are not so many opportunities for translator/interpreter career, so I started teaching right away when I finished university. So ... back to your question?

Dt: My question was really how things have changed

Teachers themselves had problems with the spoken media. They were not able to understand the flow of conversation. So, that was one of the problems. And of course the opportunities to use the language, the foreign language, the language studied ... were so limited that more or less I think that there was no need for any communicative approach, because usually what you did with your language was that you used it as a tool to get information or knowledge from written media .... from books, newspapers and so on. Of

course BBC World Service could be tuned in even here, but it took some work to listen to it because ..... now the situation has completely changed because we have a transmitter here in Banska Bystrica. It takes over the programmes of BBC World Service, the mainstream, so the reception is high quality reception. It's very good. Some 20, 25 years ago when I started listening to BBC World Service, it was on short wave and, you know, always fading and noise and things. So it took some patience and you had to give up after a while. Many people did because the reception was bad.

Dt: I want to ask you some very general questions now, and it's really getting away from teaching. But just thinking about educational traditions, whether you are a student or a teacher, would you say that you have a different educational tradition in Slovakia from the ones we have in the West, or are they very similar?

I think they are a little bit different, because, you know , under the old regime, former regime, everything was conserved. And there was the so-called philological approach. You studied language to learn to know the culture. This was the aim, which was very high, because the original aims were for you to learn (let's say) English to read Shakespeare. Or you know the highlights of culture of the language.

Dt: What about linguistic traditions? I'd like to ask you about those as well. Do you think regional schools of thought like the Prague School of linguistics ... have they had a lot of effect on the way language is taught? Or do you think this is just completely separate?

Well, this is something I wouldn't want to express my opinion on because as I said I didn't study methodology of teaching ..... well, I did afterwards, but not initially at university. I was trained for translating and interpreting . I think the Prague School of linguistics was more a less a thing of theoretical rather than practical ..... but I know that many of the protagonists of the Prague School of linguistics were interested in language teaching, and they may have had their opinions influenced by their theoretical concepts.

Dt: I was reading something by a man called Jozef Vachek. He was writing that there were all kinds of effects . This interested me a lot. I wondered what you thought about it, because I know you are a linguist.

I think that two main ideas of Prague School of linguistics is structuralism and functionalism. We have had our share of the structuralist approach to language teaching ... all those drill exercises, repeating grammatical sentences according to a grammatical model .... and repeating 10, 15 sentences with exactly the same grammatical pattern.

Dt: Did it come from the Prague School or did this come from somewhere else?

I think it was also .... it was the behaviourism ... where you know you tried to train like the rat in the maze ..... which is all very well, but I don't think it worked very much . Because you can learn a particular structure by heart and know it very well, but in a real situation, when you do not have time to think about grammar or things like that, you will fail to use the proper structure . And maybe more it was influenced by the other idea of functionalism, that language has certain functions and you need certain language means to achieve those functions, like ..... The well-known example is that if you describe a bicycle pump, no matter in what detail you describe it, (but) if you do not know anything about bicycles and what is the thing used for, you do not have the idea in fact of what is it. So perhaps, this may happen .....and influence the way languages are taught.

Dt: Do you think there is any connection between the Prague School and communicative language teaching? They sometimes go on about the communicative function of language ... I was quite surprised .

I think so because talking where to have the task that works (?) somebody a foreign language, the first question is what the person is going to need the language for . Because you can't learn the whole language with everything, so you have to make the needs analysis (that's Widdowson's term) ..... needs analysis and then again , sometimes this has led to different extremes in the communicative approach that .... you may have

students whose ....for example whose vocabulary is limited to (let's say) 800 or 1000 words, which is Basic English in fact. I think that Basic English was about 800 to 1000 words. And they are so skilful at using patterns that they can express almost anything. And there are students whose vocabulary is really very rich, who read books, but again it seems that they do not have the opportunity to use so much the language. So they are ... they can't do with what they have so much, although they have their .... let's say their vocabulary is so high, several times higher than the basic 800 words ... and they can't do the things which the students with limited vocabulary can do . And there is another question that, when you have the student at school while he's learning English ... but what afterwards , if the opportunities to use the language are limited? I would say a common experience even of our teachers that, for example, when we go to an English-speaking country for (let's say) a month or 6 weeks, and when you return it's much more easier for them to express your ideas.

Dt: Are you suggesting that communicative approaches may be suitable for some students, but not for everybody?

Yes, I think so. Many many students do not need the language. Well, this is not our case of course, because we are a teacher-training institution . So our students will need ..... well, the language is their job, their main job. But perhaps in ESP, for example, in technical universities, sometimes they need the language of written communication . And the communicative approach I think is much more time-consuming because .... what it requires is practice and constant contact ... not just knowledge.

Dt: Thank you very much for that. I've got a series of questions now about English language teaching projects. This is where the British Council will come in, and things like this. I want to ask you what are your impressions of UK-funded ELT projects in this region? It can be British Council, it can be something else. Do you think the money is spent well? What are your general opinions? Then I'll ask some specific questions.

I think that .... and this is something I have been saying for so long..... British Council

projects are more or less concentrated on methodology teaching, methodology in not only pre-service, but also in-service teaching . Whereas you know the problems here are not so much with methodology, because methodology you can ..... well we have heaps of books from ....thanks to the British Council and donations from abroad about methodology. So what we really need is native speakers as persons who are irreplaceable.

Dt: In what sort of things?

Because you know, a Slovak English teacher can study hard and learn, and know things .... can specialize in whatever, methodology, literature, whatever. But one thing which he can never be is a native speaker. Because, as they say, the only way to be a native speaker is to be born a native speaker.

Dt: Do you think a Slovak teacher teaching methodology and an English teacher teaching methodology .... is that the same? Is the methodology the same? Or are they teaching different methodologies?

Well, as I have said, I am not a methodology teacher. My fields are grammar, lexicology, phonetics. So perhaps ... I wouldn't like to answer that. But I think that the methodologies have come quite close thanks to the influence of methodology specialists from the British Council.

Dt: In each university we have a pedagogical department. They have a specialist in educational methodology . What do they think of outside methodological experts coming to one department and working with Slovak counterparts, this kind of thing, going to schools. Because English is just one subject which is taught at the university and in teacher training universities, there's always a pedagogical department. And they're supposed to be teaching general methodology. So if the methodologies are not the same, do they worry about this?

(inaudible) ..... The faculty was just a Pedagogical faculty and then it was split into two, and now it's a university with different faculties. And there used to be a department of

pedagogy and psychology, which is now a part of the Pedagogical faculty. But I hear that at the beginning of this academic year there has been a successful attempt to establish a department like this at this faculty, the faculty of Humanities. But it has only 2 or 3 members so far, so it just *(inaudible)* of the future.

Dt: I've got one final question and that's it really, unless you've got something you want to ask me or say something. Really, what sort of training or support do you think outside agencies could be providing for a department like the one which you run?

Well, this is a question of money. What we need is ....I think there should be no department of English language, whether it's called department of English and American Studies, or department of foreign languages or whatever..... And not only of English, but French, German and so on. In each of these departments should be at least one native speaker, primarily as a native speaker. And, you know because I think we need native speakers primarily for what we call practical language teaching. Everybody says that it's very important to teach the communicative approach for practical language, but nobody of the foreign experts wants to teach that. Somehow it ...

Dt: Do you think there's a reason for this?

I don't know. Sometimes I think they do not consider it a specialism like ..... literature teacher, grammar teacher..... And then of course ....

Dt: It's not a content subject ..... you're teaching skills.

It's not a content subject, yes. That may be the reason. But I think that this is the primary .... it would be on the top of the list of priorities, practical language. And then subjects concerned with the culture of the country, like history ... what we call life & institutions from that country .... British life & Institutions. They have it here in Slovak literature ....

Dt: So methodology is way down the list really?

Methodology would be towards the bottom of the list.

Dt: How about linguistics? Do you think Slovak specialists would cover that better?

Well, I don't think that the Slovak specialists will cover it better, but you know it's something which is not so urgent. Because Slovak teachers can ... they have now materials, and they can study and they can do that. Not so with such as concerned with the culture of the country, because you need some experience with the country. And as I said, the total priority would be language .... practical language. Because you know if ..... in the department when teaching loads are prepared for the academic year, this is the problem. If I were offered a specialist in English literature with an international reputation and a person who would teach practical language, I think I would opt for the practical language person . ..... Maybe this is not right, I don't know. But Slovak teachers .... of course they can teach practical language lessons you know, but we are always mock native speakers. We do not have the feel for nuances and shades of meanings and collocations and things like that.

Dt: Is that language awareness or is it what we teach in schools .....just sort of communicative English, would you say? Because there's two levels, there's actually getting people to use language and it's making them aware of the nuances, which is a bit different. That's really language awareness.

Well, I think both things together. You know because ideally ..... the ideal situation would be not to teach practical language at all and to send the students for 1 year let's say to the country where the language is spoken. But as things are it's still cheaper to bring a little bit of England to Slovakia in what is 1 person, a native speaker, than to send 60 students for one year.

Dt: Thank you very much for the interview. I can now switch off. The end.

APPENDIX G: TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR EVA TANDLICHOVA (18.11.97)

Dt: How would you describe the state of ELT in Slovakia before 1989?

It's really a long tradition, English language teaching, in former Czechoslovakia before 1989. English was part of the curriculum in schools since the beginning of the century ..... mostly 20s and during the War, as well. The teachers of English in that then Czechoslovakia were also the scholars, mostly linguists ..... and very many of them were members of the Prague school. And they also were writing the materials which were used then.

During the war period and especially after the war in '45,' 48, Russian became the first foreign language and English, German and French were a secondary foreign language, kind of. They were included in the curricula of the then gymnazia.....they were gymnazia which resembled the gymnazia of the War period. It means something like today's 8-year gymnazia. Latin was included: Latin and Greek as well. So English had its part in the curricula.

In 1958 there was a lot of reform, school reform which ('58, '59) .... which transformed the ... No. Sorry. It was '53 when the gymnazia were transformed into secondary grammar schools actually, secondary grammar schools which were 3 year grammar schools. And in 1958/59, at the beginning of the '60s, the primary school was changed from 8 year studies into 9 year study. Where primary school was 8 year primary school, there was a final State Exam (or school leaving exam it was called) at the ..... in the 8th form. (I passed it myself so I know that it was a small maturita, or something like this). So this 8 year primary school was changed at the beginning of the '60s into 9 years. And the secondary school was extended into 12 (secondary grammar school) into 12 years, into another 4 years above the 9 .... it was 10s, 11s and 12s.

The language study at the gymnazium ... at secondary school then included Slovak language, Russian language and one foreign language which was compulsory..... You could choose from English, German and French. And because the 9 year school attendance was at the primary school, they somehow started to think at the beginning of the '60s to introduce the foreign language into the primary school.

Since 1962 they established so called elite schools, we call them (primary schools) where English was taught from the 3rd year of the primary attendance. It means that 8 year olds started with English. And then they started with Russian in the 5th year .... it means at the age of 10.

Dt: How many elite schools are we talking about?

They were about 10 all over Czechoslovakia. ..... Here in Slovakia it was Bratislava and Kosice which had such schools ..... one or two. In Bratislava there were three at the end ..... And when the children started with Russian at the age of 8 with Russian, so they started with English at the age of 10. So we had two streams in those primary schools. And it was only one class which accepted children for that. They had to pass an entrance exam., so-called. The test was for maths and Slovak language. Gradually during the 70s and 80s Mrs Malikova introduced a special test which tried to .... it was applied mostly in the Nitra region .... and it tried to somehow test the abilities, the talents, the gifts of the children that were selected for those schools ... whether they had the talent, whether they were somehow able to learn a foreign language from a very early age.

Dt: But it must be still true that there were more students studying foreign languages outside these select schools than inside?

Yes .What I started with was the introduction of foreign language into the 7th, 8th and 9th grade. This was the option which was in the afternoon and if they had teachers so they opened it. It was not compulsory. It was an option.

Dt: Was it an option like sewing, ... cooking?

Yes. We have to say that there were in those elite schools that opened ... they used English textbooks, textbooks published in England, Eckersley's textbooks and Dolphin course.

Dt: Alexander maybe?

Alexander was used as a textbook at language schools, state language schools ... in Bratislava. They started it from the very beginning. So these textbooks were used till my textbooks were published. It means at the end of the 70s they somehow asked me to write the textbooks for these selective schools or elite schools, elite classes of English. But in Prague there was a lady who was ... that also for one book, she was part of my team, Mrs. Kubickova. She published textbooks for those optional, 7, 8 and 9 year .... That was a textbook which was used there, which for that period was a quite communicative kind of textbook because it was not only ..... it didn't use only a structural syllabus, but it also tried to somehow modify it for structural and a notional-functional syllabus, more or less, because the exercises there were somehow meant to transform the structure into a situation or into a corresponding atmosphere in order that the students can use the structure properly. So it was not only structural syllabus used.

In the 60s when I was studying at the secondary school .....from the 1960s onwards ... they used textbooks which were published .... It was a co-scheme with the Czech authors ..... It was the textbooks used at the secondary level based mostly on grammar-translation methods. But there were also teachers then who were not satisfied with that approach. Especially my teacher Mrs.Robancikova was very strict about it. She refused the textbook (not completely because we used to study the words, vocabulary). But she asked us to prepare posters on various topics .... family, or shopping, or anything like that. *(interrupted by someone coming in the room. Tape stopped)*

Dt: I think you yourself have also had some years spent as a secondary school teacher. What was it like to be a teacher of English in those days compared to now?

All my career started with Mrs.Robancikova ....

Dt: Was she your boss?

No. She was my teacher at secondary school.

Dt: She taught you when you were a student?

She taught us. She asked us to prepare posters in order she had .....lots of pictures for .... She really concentrated on developing our spoken skills, oral skills, listening and speaking ..... So we were describing pictures, we were making dialogues. It was outside the textbook. She somehow adapted the textbook to her idea of teaching. And during those times I decided to ... I always wanted to be a teacher. So when I entered the secondary school I decided to be an English teacher .....(I wanted to study English and Spanish actually) ... But when I entered the university in 1962, I couldn't study anything but English and Slovak, because then they combined all foreign languages with Slovak language. And I must admit that during ... my studies were concentrated on English literature .... English, not much American ... English and American literature, morphology, syntax, stylistics, historical grammar, British studies, very little American studies. And we had a lot of general English seminars, because we had to ..... I had a colleague who had English only for one year ..... not only .... half a year , I think. Well, she was very very weak in English. So there were quite a number of students like that, so we had to have the general English. And we had no methodology. We had just a very brief course, it was one term, winter term in the 5th year, a very very brief survey of the methods and that was it. But we had the teaching practice. We spent 2 weeks in the

classroom and we had to teach 6 hours then.

Dt: It was the same for me. I wasn't taught methodology either but was it possible to manage without methodology?

I don't want to continue with that! *(laughs)* In 1967 I started teaching. My first school was still the 3 year gymnazium and 3 year secondary school ..... And it was a new school in Stukovica (?) in the suburbs .... (Now it's the centre of Bratislava, but it was the suburbs of Bratislava then). The headmistress was very proud because they were well equipped for that time for languages. They had a language lab installed, and she was very happy to tell me "We have a language lab. you can use it". And I had never heard talk about a language lab,. I didn't know that there were any recordings of anything other than ..... I was afraid to switch it on.

I had a very good colleague. She is working now at the Economic University. She was a German teacher of the language, and she was our head of foreign language teachers. And she introduced the custom that we, especially novice teachers, we had to attend lessons of our older colleagues, and we discussed ..... we observed the lessons and then we discussed together about the problems. So she showed me how to use the lab and she also, because she was much older than we were, she was a very good (somehow) supervisor kind of teacher , who introduced us into the methods. And we tried to .... we just used our commonsense.

Then when I started teaching we had other textbooks. I can show it to you *(shows a copy of Peprnik)*. It was a collection again published by a team in Prague. And they tried to... or started the tradition of textbooks based on communication, because there were also some pictures, visualized grammar and structures. And even though there were grammar-translation exercises, they were also exercises which provoked students to use the dialogues. And I as the teacher tried to adapt those exercises to the class I was teaching and to the students. And they were also introduced to the facts about Britain... extracts

mostly concentrating on history and geography of Great Britain and English-speaking countries. And what was very good there ... they were extracts from literature .... the Nobel prize winners were introduced there mostly. And we can use the literature as not only for a text for developing reading but also because they were doing the English and American literature at the Slovak lessons. So we can use their knowledge from Slovak in the English lesson and somehow develop speaking .....

Listening was very difficult because we had the recordings of those textbooks on those big tapes, and we can use them also in that laboratory for listening .... it was the stimulus-response kind of programme, so they had sentences they had to repeat or they had to change something and then there was the correction whether they were right or not. So this was the only possibility but we could develop speaking skills by dialogues and dramatization in the classroom. And also I had one student who .. this was the problem that in one class you could have students who were total beginners, but also students coming from those primary schools, elite schools. And it was impossible to do the groupwork because they were very very few. So, for example in my class, it was one student. So I had to have an extra lesson with her in order that I gave her special tasks about ..... special homework, for example if there was something about Britain then I asked her to prepare something ... a kind of project work at that time.....prepare something about, let's say, London and bring it to class and tell the class in a monologue kind of speech about it. Or bring the pictures or something like that. So, we concentrated then mostly on reading and writing ..... Also the syllabus asked us to write - free writing, a longer piece of writing: it was description, narrative and essay. An essay which was written by the students every half year in January and July, a kind of summary of English language .....

Dt: How was the syllabus prepared? Was it a longstanding syllabus?

It was prepared by the ... today it's SPU, the State Pedagogic Institute. Then it was the Research Pedagogic Institute. It was here in the university .... *(inaudible)*

Dt: Was it compulsory this syllabus?

Yes. It was compulsory. They were writing the syllabus for all the subjects and the syllabuses should be approved by the Ministry of Education, and then the syllabus was compulsory for all the schools in Czechoslovakia. And when the syllabus was ready so the textbooks were written. These textbooks were somehow trying to match the syllabus. They were written according to the syllabus in order to ..... the teacher had somehow less work, because there were inspectors coming for observation of the classes. Even the headmaster can come to your class and observe it and then analyse it with you. And first of all she looked into the syllabus whether you are where you should be at that time of the year....

Dt: Were people like Mr. Pytelka writing the syllabus and the materials? Or was it two different groups of people?

I think .... there were no other materials except the textbook. Later when I was teaching I think a second year they somehow started to supply us with .... there was in Banska Bystrica a special centre for teaching aids. So they started to supply us with various posters and situations ... even the slides (slides became very popular during the 60s) ... to somehow visualize the situations and make the students either describe the slide or speak about it or prepare the dialogue. That was the main activity. And also the recordings on the records. We had for example "My Fair Lady" in school and also Arthur Conan Doyle's .... Hound of the Baskervilles. So they could listen to native English speakers..... So this was .... I think we prepared our own materials like posters, or when in 1967 and 68 I was in Britain for 3 months (I got the leave from school). I visited my friends and so I was

collecting the postcards and slides and various materials, cuttings from newspapers. And then when I reached them back I could use them as part of our English teaching .... as everybody was doing. We could travel - not much but we could. If you collected enough money so you could apply for foreign currency and could apply for visa or something and spend some time abroad ..... So people could do that, English teachers, and they brought the materials and used them. And we had here in big cities .. there was "Orbis", "Orbis" newspaper in newsagents and "Daily News" from Budapest and the "Morning Star"..... So those were the sources which we used in the classroom, illustrating the authentic material and trying to show how newspapers' articles looked like or something like that.

Dt: You've raised lots of interesting points, but I want to go on to the changes which have taken place. Since 1989 there have been just so many changes ..... wider changes in society which have been reflected in educational changes. I think in this area of English language teaching the changes have been enormous. In your view, which of the changes which have taken place have been the most significant?

I think that the amount of ... number of lessons a week increased . That was a good idea because we had previously ... there was 3 or 4 lessons a week, depending whether it was a natural science branch or whether it was humanities . And when I was teaching at the gymnazium the students could choose one foreign language .... Russian was compulsory. Another foreign language was compulsory. So in the second year they could choose another foreign language so they studied three languages till they graduated . But the number of lessons was very very poor. So it was 2, 3, 4 ... and in the last year ..... in the 3rd year they had only 2 hours of English a week, which was nothing. So the increased number of lessons I appreciated very much ..... And what I appreciated was that a foreign language was included ... introduced into primary schools as a compulsory subject, not as an option at part of an elite school, but everybody could .... It was a good idea but as you know we lack teachers.

Dt: Particularly at 1st grade and 2nd grade?

That's the bad about it ... that they decided to requalify Russian teachers.

Dt: Do you think this was not a good idea?

It was not a good idea because.... imagine that the Russian teachers were in their 40s, 50s, in their middle age. So I even met a couple of my former colleagues who had to requalify ... Russian teachers who had to be requalified .... and one lady told me that it was very difficult to study vocabulary or to learn words because she can't remember it. So, it's not that ..... Our Ministry thought that when somebody had training in Russian, in methodology and in linguistics, so he or she could easily get into the methodology of English language or German language (because those were the two languages which were in the foreground) .... and study another foreign language, which is not true at that age. It could be done with somebody in his 20s or 30s maybe. So, that was not a good idea because the odd thing is ..... it was a good idea from the social point of view that somehow we backed up the former Russian teachers, otherwise they would be expelled from school, be redundant or I don't know. So, the other thing is that if they are in their 40s or 50s, so they stay in schools. Now they are requalified, the headmasters don't bother whether they teach English properly or not .... they have teachers. And our graduates, even though the majority of them don't want to go to schools, there is no vacant place because the teachers are there in some parts of Slovakia.

Dt: Do you think with the requalifiers that it is just a problem of age? I can think of other reasons why they might not be successful.

It's one reason. Another reason is that it's a new stereotype that they have to learn, which is not that easy when the new teachers are experienced teachers. They very easily got their stereotype and were very happy in it . And especially when there was only one book they could use. So they knew it by heart almost by the end of their career, so it was no

problem to teach. Just take a book and that was it. So, that's another problem that probably they should study or get used to a new stereotype. And the other thing is also the new books which entered the market and our schools, especially textbooks published in Britain, which .... their layout, their structure, their methodology was completely different to what our teachers experienced. And Russian teachers especially, because Russian was not taught as a foreign language. We were studying Russian literature, we were analysing the piece of art .... the works of writers , for instance prose and everything. We knew everything about Pushkin and *(inaudible)* and all that . But it was very little status given to conversation or anything like that. So we were not able to buy a piece of .... a loaf of bread in the shop. It was a problem.

Dt: Might it have been the same syllabus that Russian teenagers studied in Russia? A first language syllabus .....that's very interesting. I've never thought of that.

Yes. It's very strange because Russians .... in those days the Soviet Union .... had a very elaborate system of teaching foreign languages. They had textbooks from the very beginning ..... students, pupils at primary school and they were starting with foreign language. They were textbooks. You could find them here. They had really a very good system of teaching, so we could copy it from them. But we had our own way anyway. So that's the methodology probably that they had to somehow .....And .... the confidence in the foreign language probably also is a problem for them.

Dt: Well let's focus on the materials and the methods. What have been the major changes with all these books coming from the UK? How are they different and what are the effects of these differences?

So, they are different, as I said, in methodology. They bring the new approach to teaching, to teaching foreign language. What is good about them is that they are full of visual material which can be used .... and they bring a lot of activities and exercises. .....*(break in the tape recording due to the tape running out, losing several seconds of dialogue)*

Dt: So you were just saying "what our teachers lack ....."

Yes. They lack, for example the ..... actually some students complain about that, especially those little ones) .....For example if they are ill or sick or something and they don't come for the lesson, and somebody at home should help them to learn the material at home, there's no help because there's only one language there ..... and the mother tongue is missing. It's good for ..... it's no good for the vocabulary and it's not too much a problem with the grammar because grammar can be explained very very easily, and if you visualize, you put it into graphs and tables ....

Dt: Well, good teachers can explain it easily. Only there are inexperienced teachers who'd have a lot of problems .

A lot of problems, yes. But if they graduated from the university ..... they should have passed all these problems with morphology, syntax and all this. But anyway, I think that the lack of the mother tongue ..... and as we somehow had some tradition here, using the everyday situations and using the realia of English-speaking countries ..... so, we now somehow lack those in those textbooks, because, from the point of view that we somehow especially (I tried it in my books, and I think that it's one way how you can make a student speak) ..... if they had a good topic, a good theme to speak about - their country, their environment, and ask (?) about the other environment, about the language, about the country, the language he or she studied. So, this balance between the possibility for the student to show what they know about their country, about their experience, about their (I don't know) family surroundings, their school and anything ..... and get information and knowledge about the country, it can be England, it can be Britain, it can be the USA, it can be anything . But there are also general topics which are valid for any country. But I think that the interest there is missing, and that is what our teachers somehow lack. This is probably why they ..... some of them refuse the textbooks or can't use them, can't teach from them

And about this "Project Work", which is a compulsory textbook for primary, it's again .....it must be a very good book. And it's a good idea to make students work on their own, because somehow the activity is pushed onto the student. But we used to do that, I always say. Because when I mentioned my advanced student in the beginner class, I was giving her the project work, because I asked her to prepare additional material for the particular topic. And then she shared her knowledge with her colleagues and added to that ... made a poster or something . So, it was a kind of primitive project work in a way .... and everybody was doing it.

Dt: No, project work is not new. What interests me, though, is .... how was it chosen? What was the process for making "Project English"compulsory? Was there a special committee?

They say it was a special committee from Saua/Sate, from the organization of teachers. There were some representatives there. I think it was it was Darina Markovicova, actually ... and there were some representatives of the Ministry of Education. They decided that this book is the best .

Dt: Do you think there is a conflict of interests ... between interests of publishers and interests of teachers?

I think so ..... *(inaudible).*

Dt: Yes, I hadn't thought about either. I'm thinking of it now. Yes, I see. Do you think the publishers should provide some support for such books when they are introduced, and, if so, what kind of support could they introduce for teachers?

I think that they should approach the teachers offering what they have, but also listen to teachers ... what they need. A very clever publisher, who cooperates with Oxford and with German publishing houses is *(inaudible name of publisher)* in Plzen. And he was here in Slovakia. He addressed the Ministry of Education. In the Czech Republic they found out that a good foreign language textbook should respect the addressee. So they

decided to write a textbook in cooperation (I'm not quite sure now whether it's Oxford or Cambridge, because it goes through *(inaudible name of publisher)* . And he wanted not only the Czech team, but also Polish ..... Poland and Hungary there ..... and he tried to ask for our Ministry to take part in it as well .. to make an international team from this part of the world, including native speakers for the check on the language etc..... and to make a good textbook, which would be useful for the non-native speakers here. But our Ministry didn't agree, so he left and I think that they started already.

Dt: What country are they doing this in?

In the Czech Republic.

Dt: And they're involving other countries as well?

Yes. Poland and Hungary.

Dt: A regional textbook? It's a nice idea.

Yes. Because I saw the textbooks which Austrians published with Oxford, I think it was. There was an international team, but mostly the members from schools and theoreticians from Austria. It's a very successful textbook. It's probably one way how to make teachers and students satisfied. Because some of the textbooks are ... can be used as they are published, for example the "Headway". But also again the writers will probably do the research or mini-research among their users of "Headway", and could adapt it and write a new series.

Dt: That's what they're doing, apparently. They're writing "New Headway". But I'm not sure about their motives for doing that ..... I think it may be to make more money.

Maybe, maybe. But, for example, I was in very close contact with Simon Greenall, who writes the "Flying Colours" . And we talked about writing textbooks ..... and he accepted some of my ideas. In "Reward" there is some space for the other side of ... even the student can speak about his or her country, or his or her town or surroundings, everything ..... And even now exercises are for using the mother tongue, for even comparison of customs or festivals in one country to another, which is good because you compare cultures and you find similarities, differences. So, that's another possibility.

Dt: That's interesting as well. Going back to the question of mother tongue.... If using the mother tongue as a resource is so important, do you think that on balance it might even be better to use grammar-translation methods than communicative language teaching? Or do you think the two balance each other out in some way?

I don't think that we can leave the communicative approach and communicative teaching , because it should be there. Because our aim is to help students to be able to communicate what they finish in speech and writing. Our teachers sometimes use these expressions incorrectly. They have in mind when speaking about communicative teaching ..... they have in mind listening and speaking, and that's it. Which is not that only, because our students, for example, probably in future will communicate more through writing letters or through computers or email or something. So they should be skilled in both forms of communication.

But I think that even though we delete the mother tongue from teaching, it's still there. Even the interlanguage in the learner's mind, thinking, it's there.....Even with our students from the university ... sometimes you see how well they prepare their speech in Slovak in their minds, and then they said it in English. So, I don't think we can avoid it . I think that it .... I'm against the grammar-translation method, because that's a kind of mechanical approach to teaching. But I think that the mother tongue can be used . The teacher should have a pedagogical feeling when to use it . But my idea is that the mother tongue ... the usage of mother tongue in communicative language teaching should be ....

its role should be to somehow remind students of the qualities of both languages, and also of the way how people communicate when there is a gap between them.
The interpreter or translator should transfer the idea, not word for word, because verbal translation is very structured, very mechanical. You should translate a sentence as it is. Now, you have to say the ideas and express yourself in both languages .

Dt: That's right, yes. I think some people, when they think of translation, they think of grammar-translation ... the connection is so strong. This is the problem.

Yes. And because I think that we still will face, or our students will face the situation that there is somebody that doesn't speak the language, and the other wants to speak to them. He doesn't speak the other's language, so there'll always be somebody who should somehow translate even in a small community like family. Students now communicate ... they spend a year in the States, and then they make friends with somebody there and those Americans can come here. So in the family they will translate, in a way.

Dt: Where does all this leave native speaker teachers then? If translation is important and the mother tongue is an important resource, does that mean that native speakers are ... well, they obviously..... most of them are lacking ..... very few of them have good Slovak? So, is this a problem, do you think?

No. I don't think it's a problem. I think that the usage of mother tongue is there with the non-native teacher. Because the students know that you speak their language, so it helps the teacher,. for example in teaching vocabulary, if you use the translation it speeds up the teaching because it's not such a problem to say it in Slovak. Let's take the qualitative contribution of both of native and non-native teachers to the teaching of foreign languages, in our case English. Because you as a native speaker .... you even don't need the .... probably in explaining vocabulary or structures or facts or anything. Because your command of English is excellent because you are the native speaker of the language. You can find all the nuances and antonyms and homonyms and everything to help you .... even the body language to help you to illustrate what you wanted to say, even to the

beginners. And with the beginners ..... if we push the beginner level to the primary, there's no problem .... the kids don't need the translation from the very beginning. Sometimes ... it's like with computers. They have the feeling, the fixed feeling ... some intuition which helps them to get the feeling of the language. So, I think that it doesn't mean that we want to exclude or I would recommend excluding native speakers from the schools, no. They should be there because their contribution is *(inaudible)*.. the suprasegmental, the prosodic features of the language which we can't ..... even the difficult part of grammar like idioms or phrasal verbs or the ... especially in English, which is a very idiomatic language. So we can .... I would say that when the native speaker of English would use Slovak in teaching, it would interfere with the feeling of the language .... because you are the bearer of other ... maybe the culture of the language, but also the flavour of it . And if you use .... For example we have Martin Waters .... speaks Slovak quite well, but he doesn't use it during the general English classes. And we don't expect him to do .... and nobody would. But when he's doing the translation classes with translators, it's very helpful because he can somehow help them to.... He can see the problems our non-native speakers have when translating a piece of writing to English, or from English to Slovak. So again, there's another level, another layer where the .... even the native speakers can help, but it's a special field .... the translators' and interpreters' classes. That's more or less the experience the native speaker has with translations .... he can help. But in the ordinary class I think that the native speaker should be a native speaker teacher. A non-native teacher can use both. But when I was saying that textbooks published in Britain don't respect the mother tongue of the learner, it's a problem ..... one from the standpoint of the non-native teachers, our teachers. They feel it ..... that there's a gap there, or something. Maybe only because they were used to the textbooks which brought the translation, the mother tongue there.

Dt: Thank you very much for that. That is all very very interesting. I'm just going to summarize some of the topics we talked about, and then just ask you maybe one final question. So we talked at length about the situation of English Language Teaching before 1989, and what it was like to be a teacher then. And then some of

the major changes since 1989. In particular we talked about changes in coursebook materials and a little bit about teaching methods. We touched on the effects of some of these changes on teachers. And we've also talked about a monolingual approach to teaching and the way native and non-native speaker teachers appear to balance each other out. So really my final question is about the future ..... what kind of support we could give to teachers at this difficult time for them.

You mean, you as native speakers or ..... ?

Dt: I think in general . Because my area of interest has always been teacher education ... and it's become even more so since I came here. I think there are so many changes ... and we talked about perhaps publishers giving some support. But they can't do the job on their own . I mean, obviously, in the faculties we give a lot of training and support. But are we getting through to teachers? Are we giving them enough support to cope with these changes ..... whether they are requalifiers or unqualified teachers or even qualified?

I think that you as ..... or your colleagues here in Slovakia, the lecturers ..... foreign lecturers through the British Council, also USIS .... they have done quite a good job here and still do, because they somehow encouraged ..... especially being native speakers ..... they encouraged and not trying to learn the language and fix it ..... they encouraged our teachers to somehow start studying or think about permanent studies, permanent development ..... and found it useful for ..... especially your approach, how you run the courses with the British Council and with the Metodicke Centra, and all these institutions. You showed them how it can be done in the classroom, and they saw that it works. They could test it in their classroom and ..... on the one hand they saw it works, on the other hand they saw that they are confident, they are able to somehow adapt what they saw, what they experienced, with their classroom. And that there are resources like textbooks in the Resource Centres or teachers' books or the resource books from methodology ... that they are available there and they can read them. It's not difficult for them to read it. And if they .... the more they read, the more they understand, and the more they can apply to their teaching. So, even though there are some comments that in the Eastern part of Slovakia there are very many especially recently qualified and non-

qualified teachers .....

Dt: But there are a lot, yes.

There are a lot of them that ..... there is no use for further development for them. They don't think that that's true. Because if you leave the teacher there because they should .... because you are convinced that they need the pre-training or pre-service first, and then the in-service. So, I'm not sure about that. I think that it will take some time and you will be successful with fifty percent of the teachers. But we have to try, we have to offer them something. Either courses which have been started ..... Because the number of trainer trainers has increased so much that there are so many qualified teachers around that .... it's amazing within such a short period of time, because we can speak about five years, not more.

Dt: But do you think that perhaps we are training the same people over and over again? For example, if I go to Metodicke Centrum for a seminar, I know more or less the teachers who are going to come. But if I go to Metodicke Centrum on the day of an accreditation exam, I see people I never see again. And they come to Metodicke Centrum and then they're gone. No one knows who they are, but they're teaching English in small villages or somewhere, and they want a qualification.

I think we have to approach teachers, somehow find the way how to get to them, even in those remote parts of the country..... speak to them, find out what they need and how ..... because it's really our job.... and I think that's the role of Metodicke Centra because it's in the region. I can't do that!

Dt: You have enough to do!

...can I? And that's why I have .... in the other things are those PhD students, my PhD students. Because those are the arms which are in various parts of Slovakia, and through them .....they should somehow be the key persons there to either organize or to initiate or

do something there because they are there ..... they are living there ..... they see the situation ..... And being the PhD students of methodology, they have to be in contact with schools. So, through those contacts, through their mini-research or research data at schools, they have to approach teachers and get from them the ideas for talking to the Ministry, or to anybody. I've read that they are still ....because the Ministry is as it is ..... we are still somehow afraid to be in the opposition and knock at the door , and be a nuisance with the problems. That's one thing ....

The other thing is that the small little conferences which started, which somehow got the tradition in Slovakia, even within .... especially within the past year, 1997 ..... So, it's also a way where you can bring more teachers in too. And the resolutions of those meetings or gatherings can be passed to the Ministry and to people who are responsible for this educational system. So, I think those are the ways, but I think we are still not courageous enough. That's the problem, that some ..... I don't know, maybe it's because all the atmosphere in the society is .... everybody is afraid of all things. And, maybe there is another thing, that the teachers are so overloaded with extra teaching or extra activities to secure the family and themselves that they don't have enough strength to .....But there are found some pearls .... like we had here at one of the gymnazia, the *(inaudible)*. The director was .... the headmaster was expelled from school by the Ministry or somebody, and the students got on strike and the teachers got on strike and ... she's back. So we have to be more *(inaudible)*, even not only within the community which language teachers come in, but also towards the authorities, who decide sometimes without asking teachers about things..... That was the promise they gave us in 1990, that they would listen to teachers, they would talk to teachers, they would give us (especially language teachers) the space for making the English language or foreign language teaching better. But I'm afraid that it's deteriorating because of these unqualified teachers .....

Dt: So teachers' voices must be heard?

Yes, I think so.

APPENDIX H: TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH I.FREEBAIRN (03.04.98)

D: I'd like to ask you just a few general questions first of all about your career writing EFL textbooks, and really how you started , I suppose, is my first question.

I: Well I started ..... I was a lecturer in English as a foreign language at Ealing College ..... I'm not sure what it was called then .....it's now called Thames Valley University (it's gone through many changes of name). But at the time it was something like Ealing College of Higher Education, and Brian Abbs was the Director of Studies or the Head of Department .... EFL department .... in those days. And it was my first job after getting an MA in Linguistics at Reading University, where I studied under Wilkins and Crystal. And so it was the first job I applied for, and got it .... and so I worked there basically as a teacher. I did all sorts of things there, you know, (as) a teacher of English. Then after a couple of years Brian said: "I think we need to write something for our students", because the materials we were using weren't very ..... they just were not very suitable. They were "The Turners", an old-fashioned sort of strip cartoon ....*(D: Oh yes. That's right)*. And they didn't really relate very much to the sort of students we had, who were mostly young au pair girls. And so we started writing our own materials to suit them and this went on for a couple of years (we had a third person with us at the time) .... And eventually we thought we could put it together into a book rather than just leave it as materials, so that was when .... you probably won't remember .... but the first book was called quite simply "Strategies" *(D: Yes I do. The white one.)* White "Strategies" . That's right. *(D: I taught with it for many years)* So that became ..... Well we went round to many publishers with it and they thought : "Oh. We're not sure about this. This is a bit risky." And Cambridge turned it down, and various people who have regretted it since.

D: Would you describe it as very innovative?

I: At the time, it was innovative. And Longman were looking for a risk project to invest some money in, which they felt would have some chance in poking its head above the

noise level, and it did exactly that. But it was a strange book, because it went from beginner's level up to intermediate .... it did all sorts of things. And so it had a sort of odd market in the UK, as well as abroad, but it did have its problems in terms of syllabus. So what happened was people said: "Well, we just love the newness, the creative speaking and writing" ..... (it had) a lot of new feels (?) to it. And at the time I was quite .... I suppose I was heavily influenced by David Wilkins , who was my tutor at Reading. And he was at the time working on notional syllabuses, and the whole tenor of his course (the MA) really was veering towards that direction of language and how it was used. And so, with that in mind, we did change the look of the material by giving it these descriptive functional labels, which it didn't sort of have when we first started writing it. We just thought: " What do our students want to use? What would they find most interesting at this point?" And that helped, but his insights helped us to channel it and to re-organize it , and give it labels, which in the end were,I think, quite innovative. So the whole material was different, a bit unruly. And people came back and they said: "We like it in principle. We think material is going in this direction .... But could you please write something that is more staged at beginners, working through, then up?" So then we went back and did ..... *(D: The red one?)* . The red one. The cherry-red one, which was black-and-white. And it had its points. We enjoyed doing that. It was just very very different, and I remember teaching in Sweden with it, using Swedish .... and that was something which we advocated quite a lot to begin with, use of the students' native language to help ... to get across instructions and so on for role play ..... And I remember teaching from the book and realizing that a lot of the material was very useful for the students in Sweden. But I used Swedish to explain. And then I compared the level of my class with another, who had been using a traditional course in .... and using English only as a medium of instruction. And they had got much further. And they knew more new words. And so I thought: "This isn't quite ..... something's not quite right here". So although it taught them what they needed to do with the language, it still had long holes when it came to vocabulary and general exposure to language. So with that in mind we went back and wrote and ..... I'm not sure ..... I think we wrote "Opening" next, probably, or "Building". I

can't remember which.

D: The way I remember it as a teacher .... I remember teaching a series with the red one, "Starting Strategies", and then going on to "Building", and then "Developing". And then suddenly "Opening" appeared .....

I: Then it went back to "Opening". Because "Developing" ..... You're absolutely right, historically. "Developing Strategies" was the very first book which came with colour. And from that moment on they decided to go back and start again, so "Opening" came out .... a completely new edition with colour. And "Building" again, we re-did it. But in fact there was not much point in re-doing the others because it had had a very long shelf-life, and I think people get tired of a course after a bit. And, no matter how you think you're changing it or refining it, it's still the same old course for them. And although we did a new "Building" and it sold quite well, it wasn't a new book. "Opening" was different, it was very different from "Starting Strategies". And so that had its own markets. But once we got to "Studying Strategies", the fourth one, we felt that it was time that the series was put to bed, because we'd moved on in our thoughts and how we wanted to present the language ..... and it served its purpose because it did move things forward quite radically in those days.

D: Does it surprise you how well it's lasted? (I: Yes!) *I mean, I was teaching from two of the "Strategies" books last week in Slovakia.*

I: Really? Yes. No. It does surprise .... and sometimes we look back and think: "I always liked that exercise, and that was quite fun. And do you remember that one". And so, understandably, a lot of your fresh ideas go into your earlier books, and whether you like it or not, people will always remember you for the first books that you do ..... and not for your latest ones, however much you think that they'll have been refined and improved and so on. And they will go back and like the old ones. It's like, you know, John Fowles and "The French Lieutenant's Woman". The best one is the first one. And you can't win on that one.

D: Which are your personal favourites? The books you wrote first or what you're producing now?

I: Well .... They all have ..... All the courses ..... I remember you wrote this question: "What do you feel has been most satisfactory?" and you think: "Well. Actually, all the courses are satisfactory, because they're courses". I think it's when you're doing an ingredients book that it doesn't quite give you the same satisfaction. There's nothing quite like starting a new course and completing the four books. Because the feedback is always very positive while you're doing it, and so they're all exciting. And "Discoveries" was tremendously exciting .... doing that ..... it just really was. And there was so much excitement when the books came out and people fell over themselves. Although people don't know it in quite the same way in this country, it is the one course that has really made our names, as far as we're concerned ..... that's "Discoveries". It's just been adapted so many times around the world, much more than "Strategies" ever was, because it's much more accessible. And in some ways that was a very satisfying (book) , whereas "Snapshot" ..... even now "Snapshot" is, because it's new and it's delving into new territories .... and the idea of the photostories .....and getting things together with a slightly different focus, and thinking how can you do the same stuff but differently, and that is always the challenge on every new course..... why you do it again, or you get tired of doing the past tense ..... there's a bit of an element of : "I've done this one before". But always because you're aiming at a slightly different section of the market, and perhaps a slightly different nationality, there are other parameters at work. And so the challenge is different each time and it will come out looking different, even though it's the same topic ... it will have a different angle. And it's part of the challenge of doing it. You want to get it more right this time than you ever did before, and you want to cut out that part that didn't work. And there are always improvements to make ..... you're never satisfied with what's gone on. And you change. And I think that's the problem. A lot of teachers say: "Why have you changed from this to that?" And they want you to say: "Well, because that was wrong". And it's never quite that.At the time it was what you wanted and it was right, but five years on you see it in a different light and you want to

change it and try something different. Otherwise you would never bother, would you, if you didn't have some critical faculty of your own work? So it's still fascinating ....

D: I'd like to ask you about your contact with teachers. As an author and a teacher yourself..... I mean obviously you are involved in teaching as well as writing ..... at what levels do you meet with teachers from different countries?

I: First of all I do teacher observation in this country. That's not terribly ..... but I used to ..... well I still do RSA assessments, obviously. And then I have been a British Council inspector for several years and that involved watching classes and teachers. And a lot of them would be ... not a lot of them ..... but some of them would be from other countries. But mostly they were UK teachers. So, there's no doubt that one gets class contact like that, but when it comes to teachers abroad, it varied. I mean ..you get ..... obviously the conferences you go to, you will meet teachers. But they tend to be the elite teachers *(D: Yes. That's right)* .... and they're not necessarily representative of who's using the courses. They'll be the teachers who like to talk to you because they're brave enough, and their English is good enough, and they want to say: "I've talked to Ingrid Freebairn". And so you can get a very coloured picture of what the actual reality is. And what happens on a trip..... So if Longman says: "Right, Ingrid. We want you to go out to Slovakia or the Czech Republic", what they will do is try and get together a mixed programme which will involve in the morning visiting schools and teachers, and then giving a talk to teachers in the area. And perhaps in the evening meeting the Directors of Studies of schools. So they're different levels of teachers at each time. But you do in that ..... it's the visiting of the schools which is actually the most illuminating, even more so than the people who come to your talks ..... because, again, they'll do what you say and they'll say: "That's a nice exercise". But you really haven't got any clue about how they conduct their lessons or even how they would use your material in class.

D: That's what I want to ask you really. At any stage, either at the piloting stage or after publication, do you ever get to see other teachers using your materials in class?

I: Yes. Oh yes, you do. It will usually be after, not at the piloting stage. Piloting ... What we ..... Going back a little bit in time, when we prepare a course, we will initially have gone out and done what we call focus groups. We will have visited classes using other material at that level, and watched them use it .. chat to teachers and say: "What is it that you want?" to know what they are looking for. Then we will get groups of teachers together in focus groups in countries .....

D: This would be in the UK or different countries?

I: No. In different countries. And there will be invited teachers who will come when you're half-way through a project ..... you've got material to show them and questions you want some feedback on. And that will be a group of about fifteen. And usually they will have done some preparation to come to it. And they're keen ..... I mean, they're not the average teacher, I would admit, but they're possibly going to be more articulate because they're not afraid of using their English. And so you do get some useful information from them. And then after that, we will send ..... or during the same procedure ... we will get teachers, certain people who will advise on various drafts of the materials. We get readers. So there will be two or three in Brazil, two or three in ..(where?) .... Poland .... who will comment on the material and say: "We would quite like to see this in it or, for our purposes, we would quite like to have less of that and more of that". And there's a bit of a balancing out as to what you think you can actually afford to put in to keep everybody happy. So, it depends where you're targeting it, and often we do special editions for different countries where you can actually concentrate on more of what they particularly need. But for global editions you try and please everybody a bit. So then we would .... it gets read and commented on, and then eventually you would go out and watch them teach it. But that would be after it's adopted.

D: So it will be published in its final form by then?

I: Yes. But there will be a launch session, I guess, when either one of the authors or a Longman person will come out and present it and give workshop sessions on how to use it. And, I don't know whether you're aware of this, but there are what's called "Snapshot Supremos" ..... they've got a special name ..... *(D: I don't know these!)* ..... "Snapshot Superwomen", or something ..... no, they're not women. But they're specially selected champions ..... teachers who are ..... who have been over ..... they came over to this country for a conference for three days. And we came up and presented ..... not so much what it was about, because they've all read the books and they know them intimately, otherwise they wouldn't have been invited there ..... But we told them a bit more about what went on behind the scenes and the problems of doing this and that ... the (?) stuff. And they enjoyed that a lot and also got very inspired. And what they will do is to go out to the countries and get groups of teachers together and show them how they would use it. Because it's a snowball effect really, and a way of getting it down to them. Because we can't afford the time to go out while we're writing ..... *(D: That's right. Yes)* ..... Plus, I mean, it's not that so much, either ..... It's the fact that, with all the best will in the world, you cannot predict what each different country's needs are, and therefore you may well slant it, perhaps slightly unhappily in one talk. And you just need to know ..... I mean it's only when you get teachers from one country together who will know exactly what their needs are, and know which bits of the material to concentrate on, which to ignore, whatever ..... But it's that sort of fine tuning that as a general author you can't do for each country without a lot more knowledge of it . And so we feel that this is a very useful way of getting over that problem of how do we get the material into the different countries so that they will know what to do with it ..... because they don't, half the time. Especially now, when you think ..... When I say "especially now", I think that we are moving .... I won't say backwards .... but I think there's quite a difference in material, the way it looks

nowadays from the way it looked about five or ten years ago ....

D: I would say it's very much more complex, certainly, from the teacher's point of view. I don't know if you'd agree with that .....

I: I was hoping ..... I was going to say the opposite ..... *(D: Please do!)* .... If you think back at, for instance, our own courses like "Strategies", there were a lot of texts there which would be for passive recognition, perhaps ..... and there's very little instruction to the student in the book. If you compare that with the sort of materials that we're producing now, (a) there's much less on a page ..... then, all the questions which previously would have been in the teacher's book are in the student's book for the teachers to use ..... so, before you start, ask these questions ..... before you listen, ask these questions. And the questions after texts, they're printed in the book for the students and they're simplified. Those perhaps were always there, but they were perhaps more open-ended questions all the time. So there's a lot more variety in the type, and I think a lot more guidance in setting up of roleplays, and a lot more working through of things to make sure that they do work ....

D: Have teacher's books changed, then, to accompany this?

I: Yes. Well ..... I was asking somebody the other day about why do you think our books were adopted quite so widely in Poland, for instance ..... I was talking to someone ... She said: "Well. Obviously because they present real English etc. etc. ..... there's the authentic side of it ..... But also because of the teacher's books, because very few teacher's books were quite as explicit". They've got the introduction .... there's the teacher training aspect of it at the beginning ..... For us everything is laid out on the page on the page ..... this is how you can do it, from taking off your hat to putting down your pen at the end of the lesson. And although a lot of teachers would say this is anathema ..... you really don't want to spell out because it restricts their creativity, a lot of people need it. And we wrote our books .... mainly our teacher's books ..... for the large percentage of

teachers who aren't native speakers, of which there must be about 80% of the teachers. They're not IH teachers, and we're always getting this flak, if you like, from teachers here who say: "Well, you know, they spell it out too much and they're very basic". And I think that they are, but at least if they do follow it they're not going to go desperately wrong.

D: Might there be a danger that, if people follow it too closely, that in some ways they might become de-skilled? I mean, they just do what's in the book and they don't think about it. (I: I'm sure) *And this would mean that perhaps they're not as flexible, and not as good teachers as they might be.*

I: Absolutely. Yes. I mean, I can't deny that. There is that, and that's the same in any sort of skill learning..... people who follow the book too closely in the end are going to get into a narrow thing. But I don't think that's an argument, then, for not giving the assistance and a form of guidance, because I think that you're going to get the same criticisms coming back and saying: "Well, it's all very well but they don't know how to ..... they don't know what to do with the so-and-so." So then you have to go through and go back to the country and give lectures on what to do with the preview page, or something. And (they say): "Well, that's great. But why couldn't you put that in the teacher's book?" And we say: "Well, because we felt that teachers would like to experiment with how they like doing it themselves". "Oh, no....". Then you think it's not worth it. Give it to them. If some teachers will go down that route of doing everything to the letter, that's because of their personality. They will always be doing that. And if you're an adventurous teacher, you're not going to look at the teacher's book anyway. You will look at it on the page and say: "I know how you teach that" . And so there will be people who never look at your teacher's books, and they will probably be, if you like, the more imaginative teachers. But hopefully, by providing what we do, we will at least make sure that the teachers are minimally competent, and they're not going to make a total hash of it.

D: OK. Thank you. I want to move on now to the experience ..... I know you have some experience of the region I've been working in, the East and Central European region, and especially Slovakia .... that's my main interest. I wondered if you'd picked up an idea of some of the educational traditions they have there. I mean, does it seem to be very similar to the way we teach languages? Or, would you say from what you've seen that there might be differences?

I: Well .... I think, quite obviously, they ..... what you met was a feeling that it was all very traditional. You look at the textbooks that were used there, and the methods were very much grammar-translation methods. And, yes ..... (it's) not very surprising ..... and I think that's really true not just of East European countries but actually most countries that one has been to, that the older textbooks, older methodology was very much teacher-led, from the top ..... and you'd expect the students to follow lockstep. And I've watched their old teachers, if you like, going round teaching .... and, yes, they will take a text and ask questions to each student at a time. There'll be no pairwork. There are ..... I think part of the problem with bringing in new material are actually physical problems. And it's the size of the classes, first and foremost, and the nature .....if you like, the physical arrangement of desks in classrooms. And however much you may advocate the use of caring and sharing methodology, it isn't easy for them. And however much they may endorse and enjoy the new method, I think it's harder to put it into practice, given the way their classrooms are ..... I think very good teachers can do it ..... I'm not saying ..... and I have seen them. But I think the temptation is that it's a bit of an effort to do that. It's actually much easier to go back to traditional ways of working, because you just go round the class. And getting into groups is noisy and disruptive, and there aren't the chairs, and desks are sort of ..... But I think that this is part of ..... Some of the talks when we go out there are really aimed at helping them overcome these problems in particular. And so it will be: "How do you organize successful pair and groupwork with a class of 40?. Is groupwork possible with a class of 40? When ..... on what occasions is it really worth doing? When is it not worth doing?" ..... And trying to see the problem from their point of view and saying: "What are you hoping to achieve out of it?" Because to achieve ..... just (as) being like your European teachers and doing the same sort of things is not really

good enough. I mean, I know when the Polish teachers came ..... come on courses here ... and have attended with other teachers, who've perhaps been using more .... or have been taught by more modern methods .... and they felt their English was better. And they've been using the traditional methods and textbooks. And they felt that their command of English was actually superior to the younger ones, who hadn't actually ..... who'd been through more modern methodology. I think the answer to that is that you've got to know what you want to achieve with your pairwork really, for instance, rather than doing it ..... just go into it because it's there as a new methodology thing.

D: There's no doubt that books like "Discoveries" are immensely popular. I mean, "Discoveries" was the recommended book for Basic Schools in Slovakia until the Ministry suddenly decided to distribute "Project English" for free. Anyway, that's another story. (I: Yes. Oh Yes) *But why do you think books such as "Discoveries" are so popular?*

I: Because it wasn't so different. I think the funny thing about "Discoveries" was that it was a mixture of "Strategies" and "Streamline". And it went back to having either one lesson on a page or one on two pages, as opposed to where "Strategies" had five or six pages. So it was very much down to: "What can we do in a lesson which they like?" .... and it's much more transparent. but it also combined, I think, a very attractive artwork ..... not too (many) cartoons .... It didn't talk down to the students, which I think was important at the time. It wasn't doing cartoons .... a lot of the others had cartoons, so the ones who had young students would perhaps go for that. But it had that ability to perhaps to cross over from 10 to 14, as opposed to being just fixed for 11or 12 year olds because of the artwork. So it looked nice, and it was also quite traditionally dialogue-based ..... most of it, not all of the lessons start with dialogue. But it did have a large proportion of dialogue-presented material. That was familiar ..... so you did get familiar things like dialogue and exercises in reading..... but there was also pairwork and games and open exercises, and all that felt new for them. *(D: And the listening as well, I suppose)* And the listening .... that's right. And also, I think, the teacher's book broke new ground from the "Strategies" series, because it did have all the extra activities in it, which they always

enjoy. And some teachers came up to me and said: "Well, I never do any of the exercises in the student's book. I only ever use your extra activities". As long as it's covering the right language, it doesn't really matter what you use. But a lot of teachers also found they didn't .... they couldn't grasp the idea that you didn't have to do everything in the book, and that's ..... partly the lessons being shorter help. They could cope with most of the things in a lesson, whereas with some books they get uneasy if they feel they're not covering everything. So I think "Discoveries" helps in that aspect too .... that it's not too long and therefore they feel they can actually do it.

D: Are there any aspects in "Discoveries" or (say) in "Snapshot" that may be problematic for teachers within a very traditional context?

I: Yes. I suppose there are all sorts of possible pitfalls. One thing that we hold dear to our hearts is that we actually try and include as up-to-date language as possible, and that it smacks of "now", and young people today. And this can be quite threatening to teachers, partly because they may not feel that they know about the subject matter .....*(D: You mean things like a "gig", that type of thing)* . Yes. Exactly. Or some of the names of people who come into it ..... And secondly because they may not ..... yes, exactly ..... some of the language they may not have. They may not sympathize with some of the topics, and so you can get on ..... you have to be very careful that you don't get onto sticky ground. You know exactly what the students want to talk about, but you can't always put that in the book. Because the teacher will say: "I can't possibly open that up in class".

D: How do you know what the students want to talk about? I mean is it the same across cultures?

I: Because they're the same everywhere. I mean, they will want mainly to talk about themselves, their friends, and music, and sex, and drugs, and the usual .... I mean, you don't really have to think ..... But not all of them will, and I think that you do get a lot of

teachers who say: "It's all so pop-cultured in your books, and there's no sense of educational influence" .... And you say that that's very important ..... *(D: No cultural topics)* .... Cultural topics .... to bring it in as well. And so the face validity is that you do have both. But given the sorts of students that we see with a very very short attention span, and, because their minds are very much occupied by their own world, at this age ..... you know, they're forced to go to English lessons. And they really need to be caught and attracted ..... their attention attracted immediately. And so with the attention span .. because it's not so long ... you have to have short and interesting activities that relate to them. I mean, I don't have to explain that to you, but it's very much ..... it's critical at this age that you don't lose them. And it can be threatening to some teachers, some of the topic subject matter. The language can be too, when it's expressions that they haven't heard before. So, you know, you may get an expression like "get a life", and they'll say: "Qu'est-ce que c'est?" ....."What's this, then?"

D: Do you have strange accents and dialects as well?

I: We have strange ..... We have ..... Yes. We've got a Canadian. We tend to always go for real ..... and in the elementary book it's actually set in Liverpool with a group of students from different countries. And so we have Italian, French and so on. And we therefore get ..... we make sure that the voices that we use on the tape are real ones. *(D: This is "Snapshot", isn't it?)* Yes. "Snapshot Elementary". So....Yes. Real Italian and so on. And I think it's just for ourselves .... we feel that's very important, that that's authentic ..... because people are bound to criticize otherwise. But also you feel that nowadays people are coming into contact with people who speak English all over the world, and different accents ..... and it's part of their education to learn to understand and to cope with people who don't have native speaker accents. So it is a conscious decision to bring in different dialects and accents as well.

D: Would you include ungrammatical English, something like "she don't love me" or "I ain't interested"?

I: Yes. Certainly I think in an authentic piece..... we really can't guard against what people are going to say. We do try and edit out things that are going to grate (with) teachers, but we try and include all sorts of voices. I think higher up, you know, in the intermediate level we would be more flexible really with the sorts of accents that we would have. But I think at a lower level you have to be really careful that you don't demotivate them with accents that they really can't grasp. But it's part of our mission, if you like, to use the tape to help teachers to get them acquainted with the sort of voices they will meet nowadays. And that really means they're not all Radio 4. I mean, I may speak with an RP accent, but really all the teachers they're going to meet ..... and people they're going to meet ..... are not necessarily going to speak like that. So it's important that young people today have the sorts of accents they have on tape. So the actual selection of voices takes a lot of time, because there are all sorts of considerations coming in. It's an important part of it, I think.

D: OK. We mentioned a little bit before about giving support to teachers and we talked a little bit about the teacher's book. There are all kinds of other ways we could give support. Publishers could give workshops .... there could be local teacher trainers ..... you as the author yourself perhaps might do something..... I thought there might be bilingual editions of the book ..... I just wondered which of these options do you think might be effective in helping teachers who have problems with your materials or with any materials?

I: Yes. Well I think that videos are an ideal way of helping teachers through a class. What I would like to see is a video pack for each of our markets, which actually takes one of their own teachers using the material with a group of students in their own country in the same sort of physical conditions that they're going to get ..... And not necessarily a perfect lesson at all. I don't think that helps always to have the brilliant teacher doing it ..... but something where one or two things may go wrong. So that it's a discussion point and it's a useful tool for promoting the course, certainly, and how you teach it , but

also bringing up, you know, why do you think that didn't work so well and what could she have done that is different. And that, I think , is one of the most useful ways of doing it, of using material itself. Obviously, we can come out and give a talk about the book, but actually ..... the only value that has is for them actually seeing the face behind the book, and feeling inspired because they like you, or something ..... I don't think it really gives them an idea ..... not the first time you come out..... of how they would present it necessarily in class. Because when you're giving a demo in a talk, it's unlike anything else. But sometimes when a book has been established for some time, I think it's very useful for the author to go out and say: "Let's look at all sorts of different ways that we can handle a dialogue. We know how we've taught it in the teacher's book and it says: 'Do this, that'. Let's think of five new things to do with dialogues, five new things to do with vocabulary exercises". And I think that's the sort of thing that they will pick up the tips for at a later stage, when they've used the course and they know what you're talking about. Then I think it helps to come in with other ideas ..... injected. But I do think that you do need people going round the teachers, and not just talking about it but, hopefully, demonstrating it. And certainly going into their classes and using their students as well. But I think to try and foist a course on a new teacher ... that's very different ..... that without giving them any help .... isn't very helpful. But I do think that, when you're doing it for different countries, there will be some teachers who will be much happier to have the teacher's book translated .... to have the vocabulary translated ..... and to have additional material that suits their own country, in particular. And I know that local teachers do provide this sort of help when they get their own edition. As well as having their own edition they will get their own teachers doing extra notes and things for them , and that, I think, is a great help. Whereas other teachers in the country won't. They'll (say): "I want to use the global edition . I don't need all of that extra stuff ".

D: Does Longman produce regional editions for some of the coursebooks? (I: Oh yes, it does) .. *With glossaries, that type of thing?*

I: Sure. Yes. I mean, obviously there are some countries who buy the licence for a course.

I think Hungary did. And Poland, to begin with, got the licensed edition of "Blueprint". And that's not very satisfactory for Longman, because they don't make free (?) money out of it, but it's a way for them to get it in the markets, and cheaper ..... and you can understand why they want to do that, and you sympathize with it. But, as far as I know, Longman will try after a year or so to pull them back on course with a normal edition ..... that you would pay the normal amounts for. But they will get discounts ..... I mean, I don't know enough about the fee-setting to talk with any authority about it ..... you'd have to ask somebody like Paul about that, but I know they get vast discounts abroad. *(D: Yes. That's right)* But they will have their own .... as I say, have their own editions in certain countries, but they often run both parallel ... their own edition plus the global, and they will go in different areas of the country.....

D: Do you think that there is an argument that a publisher should provide some sort of "aftercare" after selling a coursebook .... as you might after selling a car, giving some sort of guarantee? I've heard this discussed a few times.

I: Yes. I think there would .... In the ideal world it would be very good to go out in an early stage of a country adopting a new coursebook to give your talks, and things like that. I don't think that in itself is enough ... to go round and do the roadshow. I think it's interesting, as I say, but I think it needs follow-up by people around ... you know, there .... to do more training on the course. But then I think it needs to be followed up a year later to see if ..... how did this go down? *(D: Do you mean some serious research?)* ..... By the publisher. Yes. I think they need to be..... But publishers do. They get feedback from teachers all the time on how material is going. But you mean something a bit more .....

D: I mean something more active. For example, Paul is very very noticeable for the way he takes an active approach towards helping teachers who might have some problems with new materials. When I look at other publisher's representatives, it's not the case. He stands out in that respect.

I: I think you're right that it depends very much on the person who's there. We had some very good ..... well you know Bob in Brazil *(D: Yes, I do. Yes. Very well)* And the Brazilian side of it was always very hot. He did a lot of seminars. And the same in Italy with Hugh Pike (?). He's very very skilled. When he goes round they adore him. It's partly something that Longman do quite well, but it does depend on how good their local people are at doing it and how, as I say, how dynamic the actual rep like Paul is ...

D: Do you think other publishers have as good a record as Longman has?

I: No. I don't think they do. I think that's true. I'm not being biased now, because I ..... you know, I like all the publishers very much and I've got friends who work for all of them ..... But I do know from talking to friends who are authors .....they say that they're surprised at how much editorial assistance we get, because our manuscripts go in and back hundreds of times before they get accepted. And that's partly because we're so sloppy .....and I know that .... it's never right the first time. Some people write much more polished the first time round than I do .... I don't necessarily do that. But we have some very skilled people reading it. It's not just people from the outside, although they're taken on board. But the editorial group within the team in Harlow ..... we've got the best ..... and she's been with us with all our books. I mean you just don't get that standard of critique really from any other publisher . I know that just from people who say: "Oh no. Everything gets accepted. There's probably one or two things that might get changed". And I don't know whether this is because people are slightly scared of authors, or what .... slightly in awe of them. But I think every material needs editing. And I think that the editors in-house, if they're good ones .... and I think Longman have got good ones .... are the ones who are most in touch with all the markets..... because they will have ..... that's their job to find out what teachers want. So if they say: "I don't think they ..... we really want that .... and we must do that", then the answer is not to sit on your high horse and say: "But I want it like that", which is what happens a lot of the time, I think. But you go along with the changes because they're the ones who know ..... usually. There are very

very few fights over material really because they do know best. And it's the teamwork that produces the material that works. There's mutual respect, but there's also very much that training aspect in Longman's too, which is good. And they genuinely care for the teachers. I don't want to ..... I definitely don't want to go into any details about other publishers at this point. You can understand that they have a good record, Longman's.

D: My final question is really a curiosity.I've noticed that in Slovakia there are categories of secondary schools. And, for example, the higher schools are "gymnazia", the academic secondary schools. And they tend to use a mixture of materials ... and sometimes they use "Headway"..... they might use other things. Then there are business schools, and they tend to use "Strategies". And there are apprentice schools, and they're all using "Blueprint". And I wondered if you might have an explanation for this ..... is there any particular reason why different types of schools might prefer different materials?

I: I think Longman will definitely have a policy for it. And like all good business people, they want to shift their stock. And when we went into Eastern Europe, when it started opening up ..... they definitely had a policy of saying: "Let's do it in stages with them. We're not going to give them the very very latest thing". That's how they started out. "If we don't have to, they might be interested in "Strategies" and then come round to "Blueprint" and then .....". But now I think that's faded a bit. I mean, that was the initial idea that you start them off with something, and then you've always got something new to hand them .....

D: Was that economics as well ... that the older books were cheaper?

I: Yes. All sorts of reasons .... Exactly. They would be cheaper. But, now that they're so widely travelled and they go to conferences, they know what's around ... they know that there's a new book out, that's actually going to suit them much better than "Blueprint". And so there's no point .... you can't hide it from them any more. So that the answer is that I think they try very much to say: "Are you interested in this book?" ..... because that's what they want to sell . But they will move on, if they feel it's necessary, to what's

actually most suitable, because it's in their interests not to.... But maybe they felt "Strategies" is more adult than "Blueprint" .....Well it is, in a way. It actually was designed for 18-30 year olds, whereas "Blueprint" was really designed from about 16 to 25. So there is a slight age difference ..... plus also, there's a lot more ..... it's more straightforward, "Blueprint" .....there's a lot more help. And it's easier to teach and ..... shorter units. So there may be that aspect of it too. and it's also, if you like, more user-friendly, because of the labels of communication and grammar for the units .... they know exactly what they're doing. And there's a lot of signposting through the material. So it may be that the teachers find it more accessible. And, you know, you get tastes among teachers ..... the people in Latin America say: "Oh. I'm so pleased with 'Blueprint'. It's so much easier to use than 'Strategies'. Thank you very much". And other people will come up and say: "But I always actually much prefer ...and 'Building Strategies' is my favourite. I see what you're doing with 'Blueprint' but actually I much prefer the other". And you will always get that. It doesn't really matter which book ..... they all get fans of each sort ... and that's how it is.

D: Well. I'd like to thank you very very much indeed. I think I've asked all of my questions.....

I: I think you have. You were going to ask about piracy, but I had a word with the Longman people about that, and they say it doesn't actually happen very much for them to worry about in Eastern Europe. It happens mostly in the Far East *(D: And Turkey).* Yes. Right. We don't seem to ..... They may photocopy bits and bind them together, but that's up to them. Really , in the end it's not a very satisfactory way of doing it. So I don't think they see it as a great problem. Anyway thank you very much for your questions.

D: No. Thank you indeed. We can now switch off.....

APPENDIX I: TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH N.BUTLER (15.05.98)

D: I'm interviewing Nick Butler, who is Head of ELT projects at the British Council. Can I start by asking you to give an overview of the type of ELT projects which the British Council is involved in in East and Central Europe?

N: Yes. Fine. Obviously when the changes took place at the beginning of the 90s (end of the 80s) ..... beginning of the 90s, there was a real opportunity for Britain to have some impact in there. There had already been a lot of requests for support in ELT and we were able to secure funds from the FCO in order to be able to do that. So a number of evaluation visits were undertaken by senior members of the English Language Department at that time.

D: So what year are we talking about?

N: We're talking about (must be) about 1990-91. Possibly in 89 as well. Round about the turn of the decade ..... to evaluate the ELT situation in each particular country. So reports were written. Obviously when people were in country, they talked to as many people as they could. It must have been fairly difficult to identify at that time who the real movers and shakers were going to be. But as far as possible that was done as well. And as a result of those evaluations a number of projects were set up in each of the countries of Central Europe. In essence there was a very similar feel to the projects initially. They were looking at ... the areas which were identified were teacher supply, teacher development (in-service training), ESP (ELT for key groups in terms of government, business or finance), resource centres, British Studies and ..... I think materials came in at some stage, but not terribly strongly .... Those five areas which I mentioned initially are the key areas in which work was set up. So (with) slightly different emphases in each of the countries, projects were set up along those lines. So, for instance, in Bulgaria we started fairly quickly with a British Studies project. There seemed to be the opportunity there to work directly with universities in British Studies

work, and we did. In Poland, for instance, which has received by far the largest amount of funding, closely followed by Hungary and the Czech Republic ..... there was a move together with the Poles, who were very positive about setting up 55 new teacher training colleges. So the Council was instrumental in supporting that, providing some materials assessment ..... some materials and equipment, but also more specifically key people to work at setting up ELT syllabuses, curriculum .....prepare materials, train teachers. So that's how it (was) set up.Over the last 5, 6, 7 years the projects have moved in their own country-specific directions.

D: Does that mean the priorities have changed for each country?

N: I don't think it was ..... it wasn't a question of somebody sitting down and saying "OK. We will now change the priorities for Poland". I think it's happened much more organically. The projects were set up according to an initial evaluation. And as the projects have run, and .... obviously in discussion with Polish, Czech, whatever authorities ..... there have been particular shifts. So either a particular area has been dealt with, or has not been considered to be necessary ..... no more ESP as an example ..... I can't think of a particular example..... but say it was no longer felt necessary to provide this ESP teaching to key individuals ..... the emphasis has moved towards another area. I think that's not terribly well explained. I think probably what more likely has happened is that, within those five project areas, one or two areas were seen to be much more important in terms of getting ELT in that country developed ..... than some of the others.

D: Who makes that decision? Is it someone here in the British Council? Or is it a joint decision between the British Council and the host country?

N: The funding obviously comes from the Council to a large extent. Although over the years we've consistently wanted to involve either the local authorities or (not very often, but on one or two occasions) private funding into that. So it's been .... it's very definitely a joint feeling. And the Polish (?) which I probably know better than others. There is a

project board in Poland, which involves members of the Polish Ministry of Education, the Council, and the teacher training colleges, who will be looking into the situation. Although ... they make recommendations, but it's the Council itself who will decide exactly how money is going to be spent. So of course, as we are now 7 or 8 years into a project, and we are looking to .... for strategies to withdraw some of our support from Poland .... for instance, we've reduced the number of UK-recruited teachers by about a quarter over the last couple of years. The Poles aren't particularly happy about that for obvious reasons .... they'd like to see the support still there. But you know we've had to ... they've been involved and aware of the way in which we feel the project ought to be moving. And I think understand, you know. ..... in ideal terms they'd like more support, but I think in ideal terms feel and understand what's going on. And to be quite honest, they have now the capability to take it on themselves.

D: When the projects were planned, what were the underlying aims of all the projects? And what was the predicted lifespan?

N: I think there was no clear lifespan envisaged. In terms of the aims of the projects, the aim quite simply was to help the individual countries develop their ELT .... their teaching of English language within their Ministry of Education structures..... to provide, to help provide the number of teachers needed to teach English in secondary schools, and increasingly now in primary schools.

D: Just to give one example, whose initiative was the fast-track programme? Did that come from the British Council or did that come from consultation with the countries involved?

N: To be honest I don't know exactly how it came up. My fairly strong feeling is that it came up as a result of looking at a problem, with both the Council and the local authorities saying "Look. I think we did some fairly detailed planning. How many teachers are there? How many teachers are there in Poland (or whatever country)? A thousand ....."

D: Do you have statistics on that? (Sorry to interrupt)

N: There are statistics. They're very rough and ready. It was sort of back of the envelope stuff, to be honest. Again, I wasn't actually involved at the time ..... I was overseas ..... but I think that was what it was. *(D: OK)* "..... The number of teachers in Poland, teaching English, a thousand ..... number of teachers needed to teach English, the school population divided by 100 or 150 ..... how many people .... how much it was reckoned people could teach in a week ..... five thousand. (I think the number is 20,000 .... it's 20,000 for Poland.) How do we go about finding another 15 or 19,000 teachers of English?" You know, with that as the target, then people were able to think flexibly about it, you know. The present situation, normal for the whole of Central and Eastern Europe, teachers come from philology departments of English, you know English faculties ..... a 5-year course, with loads of theory and a tiny bit of methodology at the end, and they come out as teachers. If you go along that track, you'll take forever to get 20,000. So the fast-track came out of that of trying to think "Well look. They don't need all this theory. What they do need is really good teaching practice."

D: The fast-track is an example. What I'm trying to get at is this question of initiatives. Would it be fair to say that a lot of the initiatives that are connected with the projects came from the British Council?

N: I think that would probably be the case. Yes

D: And if that is the case, is there a problem in this .... that maybe people will accept whatever the Council suggests, even though it may not be their priority?

N: I think there's a danger of that. I don't think it happens. I think because the Council has been in these particular countries and many countries for ages and ages, and it has a very good reputation, I think it's known to be an honest broker. But I think when the Council came to discuss this offer of support, that it wasn't seen as any form of imperialist imposition or , you know, that ... we did talk .... and I think the way in which the projects

have gone in different directions is an indication of that..... that we have been sensitive to the needs of the countries, and as a result the countries have developed in slightly different ways. *(D:OK)* Something else I wanted to say ..... Obviously there is the possibility of anyone coming with money .... "Yes, we'll accept it". And I think there's a little bit of that inevitably in any donor situation. You know, if somebody's coming with money you want to do everything you can not to refuse it. If as a result you say: "You're suggesting a teacher supply programme ...we don't want this at all. What we want is to write a textbook". And then (?) may disagree. I would have thought in the end the donor country would say: "OK. We'll accept the money for the teacher support programme rather than nothing at all". But I think .... we have to accept ... certainly in Central Europe .... that the level of education as a whole, even during the Communist period was good. It wasn't a question of people having very low level education and therefore wanting to accept anything, as has been the case in South East Asia, Africa etc. The general level of education is good .....then the people had a reasonable idea of what they wanted. And I think the Council came together with them, talked about it and came up with what, I hope, was a very sensible solution.

D: I'd like to ask you now about the track record of the projects. Are there particular successes which the Council is proud of? Are there areas which are a cause for concern, which have proved particularly problematic?

N: Difficult to ..... Because of the length of education projects and ELT projects included in there, it's always difficult to say to what extent they've been successful. I think ....again ..... going back to Poland again.... an area I know, I've found out more about than other places .... in terms of setting up 55 teacher training colleges, that's quite a remarkable achievement. Of course it was done in conjunction with the Polish Ministry, and they provided all the bricks and mortar ... so they had an enormous investment in this as well. But I think setting that up, and ensuring that that has been a success ... and really is a success ..... is a very definite plus point. We had a publication which you may not have seen .... called "Voices from the New Democracies" *(D: No, I've not seen that)*, which

was an attempt which we put together to personalize what has happened over the last five years. Because you can put together facts and figures ... how many teachers taught, how many resource centres opened .... and to a certain extent, yes that's impressive. But it doesn't necessarily mean an awful lot. But this" Voices from the New Democracies", which I'll make sure you have a copy of *(D: Thank you)* is a document, a very short document, which was initially prepared for, I think, MPs and senior government officials in the UK, just to show .... to have actual quotations from people all across the region saying what UK, British Council involvement has done for them. And I think there's some quite illustrative quotes and comments from there. It really shows that there have been enormous changes .....

D: At what level are the respondents? Are they from a fairly high level?

N: Oh yes. Including vice ministers and heads of teacher training departments.

D: Are there ordinary teachers?

N: ....and ordinary teachers as well. So the whole mixture. I think we've carefully tried to make, provide a mix. Across the whole strata we could see that the impact was quite significant. So I think, you know, in that respect it's been a success, and I think as a whole that what indicates is that, as a whole, the projects have had quite a significant impact. On the negative side, I'm not sure really. We could look at the fasttrack programme. That really hasn't continued. The fasttrack programme was set up in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, and to a certain extent, to a lesser extent in other countries .... in Slovakia as well?

D: Oh all of them, yes. Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland ...

N: That's right. But increasingly those programmes are being phased out.

D: To put it another way ... are most of the projects sustainable or will they just end when the Council's involvement is gone?

N: Depending on .... Yes. A project is sustainable, in my view, if what .... the aims of the project are continuing to be carried out by the local institutions. And I think in those respects that is happening to a very large extent. I think teacher supply, teacher development .... there are still issues, there are still things to be done ..... but there are structures in place in all the countries in order to ensure that at some stage .... there are sufficient number of teachers teaching English at all levels.

D: A question that's just occurred to me..... In the projects there seem to be two models, if you like. There's a kind of consultancy-based model where the British Council officer is attached to a resource centre and goes into various institutions. This is very common in Slovakia and other countries. And the other model is someone who is within an institution, and works from inside that institution. In the reports which I was reading that Rod Bolitho made on Slovakia, he was very very heavily in favour of the consultancy model. Does this reflect a consensus view?

N: I think it does, actually. I think what's happened going back to before 1990, the normal form of support to these countries ... there was some support going on in these countries... was to provide a teacher, a lektor (you've probably heard that expression) to work within certain institutions. It was very difficult .... it was obviously difficult in a number of countries ... but this did happen. So .... in Yugoslavia there were 8 or 9 lektors working within university faculties of English throughout Yugoslavia. I think the issue about that .... that's fine, if you can have hundreds of people, one working in each of the faculties of English throughout the whole region. And, yes, I think one might ideally want to put in place something like that. But I think given the resources, the funding ..... and I think also looking at the question of sustainability *(D: This is what I'm most interested in)* .... that having a native speaker in the institution , you do lead to .... "Ah well. Ask the native speaker. They can do this ...." ..... where really, you know, the local people ought to be given more confidence and more ..... given the push to do things themselves. So, whether that's one of the reasons why we looked at this new model,

which I think probably started in the Czech Republic, where people were given a regional responsibility for a number of pedagogical faculties, teacher training institutions. And although in the Czech Republic they're still based in one university, they don't do any teaching at that institution, but use it as a base and will then go off to advise teachers and institutions in their particular region. And I think it's probably one which will grow. It's beginning to happen in Poland. I would imagine it'll be happening in Slovakia.

D: I'm sure it is. I just have this doubt in my mind, and I wonder if you'd like to comment on this. ... the fact that if you're working within an institution, you might be getting much more effective feedback on what you're doing than if you're just a roving consultant and you go in once or twice a year.

N: It's a real danger, and I think you're absolutely right. If you're in an institution there's a danger that you're not allowing some key individuals to develop. On the other hand, if it's dealt with sensitively, then, yes, that person could be ... the UK person could be really developing ..... *(D: A catalyst)*..... that teaching staff there, and slowly gradually extracting him or herself, or moving on to slightly different things and leaving the teaching staff more closely involved. And by doing that on a day to day basis, you'd probably achieve things more quickly ...

D: But are you saying that that's not happening, generally?

N: I'm not sure that it *is* happening. I think .... But again, we have to look at resources. That will happen in one institution. There are 19, 20, 30, 40, 50 institutions in a country. And we don't have 30 or 40 or 50 people, or funds for ... to put them in each institution. So we looked at another model and a way of doing it on a regional basis. I think, yes, if it is a case of people only visiting once or twice a year, I think that's a recipe for not very much happening. I would hope ... and there are indications that this is happening .... that there are more flexible, more creative ways of getting teachers together, of dealing with particular institutions, rather than paying a visit just once or twice a year .... bringing

people in together to exchange ideas is what is also quite important. So creating a network..... What you don't have ..... one person in an institution, a UK person .... you have a very small network. What we're trying to do is extend the network., so that within a region we can be working with a larger number of people., and hopefully that will then cascade down to the institution itself. There are dangers of course with that model and it can fall flat on its face, but it's one way .....

D: Thank you. I want to move on, to get away from projects and just to talk about educational change in the region. I'd like to ask you .... what seem to have been the principal changes in English Language Teaching in the region as a whole, and if there's any kind of conflict between old traditions and new ideas which are coming in?

N: Well you can probably answer that better than I can.

D: I've asked it to lots of people and I've got lots of different answers to this.

N: Very simply, there's been an enormous increase in the amount of ELT going on. Whereas before it happened in very small individual institutions, I think there's been an enormous increase on that side. I think that's been significant. In terms of ..... so there's been change in that respect ..... in terms of other educational change with respect to methodology ..... I think there's no question that before any significant change .....there was the grammar translation method. Which is fine .... and I think reflected the education system at the time. And I think, as you and I know from various parts of the world, it's quite often ELT or methodologies which are in the forefront ..... certainly about any change towards a more communicative or ..... participative way of teaching a language. So, yes, in theory there could well be a little bit of resistance to change, if the vast majority of our students teach in a still traditional form. I actually don't think that's happening at all. I think you'll find some of the more experienced teachers might find changes difficult. But on the whole, I think because there's been a very low level ... a very low number of teachers initially ..... the new teachers that are coming in tend to be younger, tend to be more open, tend to be more westward-looking, and more prepared to

think about what they're doing, what they're teaching, how they're teaching. And I think communication seems to be very important, so I think it all goes together ..... to developing a lack of resistance to the changes which this type of ELT methodology is bringing in.

D: Do modern materials encourage people to be more reflective? Or is there a tendency that ... everything is presented in a kind of package and you don't have to reflect all that much? This is something which is worrying me.

N: Well, I've always had a problem with materials. I'm not a publisher's greatest friend, in terms of ... I think that in ideal circumstances each class or institution ought to be developing its own materials in accordance with the needs of the individual students. So yes, I think there is a danger of you saying: "Right. Here is *Headway*. Here is *Look Ahead* or whatever. Get through this and you'll be able to take First Certificate." To a certain extent it can lead to a non-reflective view, although I must say, to be honest, to be fair to materials, there are usually elements within all teaching materials where it's saying: "Think about your own position. What do you like doing at the weekend". So it does provide that opportunity for reflection. Is that what you meant?

D: Yes. I'm thinking about the content certainly, and also thinking about the methods, which underlie the materials. And I'm thinking ..... I'm wondering if there's a danger of teachers perhaps becoming de-skilled, because everything is there in the package, the content, the methods.

N: No. I wouldn't say de-skilled. They certainly have to slightly different teachers. Everyone's been aware for ages .....you're moving away from a lesson where the teacher is providing all the input to a lesson where the students are given the opportunity to think a bit for themselves, to communicate more. I attended a very interesting..... did you go to the session by Michael Lewis at IATEFL ? *(D: No, I didn't).* It was quite interesting because he was saying..... *(D: .... because I don't like Michael Lewis very much).* No, I know. Well, I quite enjoyed it. I certainly get on with him in a strange sort of way, but I certainly don't agree with him all the time. But he's quite provocative and he does come

up with some interesting ideas. And one was him saying that a student-centred lesson is in fact a bit of a nonsense if it's taken too far. *(D: I agree with that).* Because the only ... that means they're getting virtually no input from a native speaker, from a teacher .... *(D: That's right. Yes).* And so there needs to be a fair amount of teacher input in, you know, in verbal or in some form or other. So, what I would hope though, with this sort of methodology which is current in the UK and worldwide these days, is that it enables the students to think about why they are studying ..... and tries to make the context in which they're learning the language as real as possible, rather than seeing ..... is learning as any other academic subject, is learning the language for a real reason (?). And I think there is no problem with that in Central Europe, certainly not with the students because they have an enormous desire to learn English.

D: Could their real reason be to pass an examination? And, if so, would that affect the way we should be teaching them?

N: There is always that element. I actually think it's more than that. It's away from that sort of situation because you are ..... they are there in Europe, they want to be more involved in Europe. There's MTV, there's all sort of things in English, the Internet and what have you. So they really want to learn English as well as having to pass an exam in it. And, yes, exams should be part of a whole educational structure. So if the exam is terribly traditional, then there's something wrong .... and we're teaching communicatively .... then there's something wrong with the system.

D: Isn't this the case in most countries that the changes in the examinations come later? It should be that they change first, but they always seem to change afterwards.

N: Well, there are two ways of ..... Yes. If the exams are that important, then they ought to be changing at more or less the same time.And I think I probably would agree that it's mostly the exams which change last. There is ..... and I've been involved in something which happened in Egypt about 10 years ago, where in fact they ....because the exams

were so important, it was the exams that changed first. It was decided that you had to change the exams first in order to ..... to make them more communicative, or more up to date or whatever ..... and then that had a knock-on effect on the materials. They had to change their materials and way of looking at it. So I think ..... it's a balance you have to make. I would hope though that a good teacher, if there was a very traditional exam and a communicative way of teaching, would be able to spend some time preparing students for that particular exam if it had to be taught in that way..

D: I suppose it's my final question really. Assuming that all teachers aren't good, and a lot aren't very experienced and they need support .... what kind of support can we give to teachers in countries like Slovakia in this context of change .... where they're sort of drawn into directions? Do we need new initiatives, or should we continue with what we're doing, and do it as well as we have been doing it?

N: An interesting one. I would hope that the work which we have been doing (say) over the last 8 years in Slovakia has set up structures, or has developed a cadre (to use an old-fashioned term) of teacher trainers in Slovakia, who will basically be able to do that ....

D: With Slovak teacher trainers?

N: ..... Slovak teacher trainers, who will be able to provide that support to new inexperienced, up- and-coming teachers . That's not to say that the Council or outside agencies won't be involved at all, but I think it will be a totally different form of support ..... that it should then be really requests coming from Slovakia, the Slovak Ministry of Education, teacher training institutions .... to provide certain input in some form ..... probably in the form of somebody coming out to conduct (let's say) a course. But I think there must be other creative ways of doing it ..... but without necessarily having people on the ground. Obviously there would need to be one, two, depending on the country and depending on resources. But that's not being very .... there've got to be more creative ways than those I've just mentioned. But I can't actually think of particular examples of how we can ..... But I think , if we talk about project sustainability we must be looking at

some time, some stage ..... the whole point of sustainability is that you provide input; the locals take it on board and adapt in the way they want to; then they can carry on with the work after British funding is withdrawn, massive British funding is withdrawn, or US funding or whatever ..... funding from the World Bank or whatever. And so, in essence, it's the responsibility of the local teachers, the local authorities. But, knowing that they can come to the Council, or whoever, to discuss (openly one would hope) ways in which further support might be provided.

D: Well, thank you very much, indeed. Is there anything that you want to add, that my questions have not allowed you to say?

N: I've talked too much already. It's an area where you can talk about all sorts of things.

D: We could keep going all day.

N: Very easily. It's been an enormous ..... such an enormous amount of input by the Council, by the British Government into the region. And it's all ..... I don't know how many UK teacher trainers have been out there, but .... hundreds, a couple of hundred. So they've all experienced and provided a lot of support to the region. And I think it's ..... well lot's of things are happening. And they have lots to give now to other parts of the world. And we're looking at ways of possibly getting people to move beyond the borders of East and Central Europe to pass on their experience to other people

D: I'd happily be interested in that. Thank you very much indeed.

APPENDIX J: TRANSCRIPT OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW, BANSKA BYSTRICA (moderator E. Homolova, translated by I.Garayova).

E: So, I welcome you and thank you for coming. I think that at first it would be good to introduce ourselves to one another because not all of you know each other. I would like you to introduce yourselves, to say where are you from and where you teach ..... something about yourselves. Z.....?

Z: So, I am Z..... from Martin. I teach at Budovate (?) Basic School in Martin. Shall I also tell you about my teaching experience?

E: Yes, go ahead.

Z: I have been working as a part time methodologist for three years. Now I cooperate with the Methodology Centre in Bystrica. I am doing ..... I do methodology seminars for Basic School teachers. And at the moment I also cooperate with Oxico from Oxford University Press ..... those seminars which came here. And what else? I like English very much. I like teaching small children very much. I was also teaching at secondary school for three years , but I have come back because I have realized that this age range is simply ideal for me. That's all.

E: It is the most suitable for you. Well. Thank you.

L: So, I am L ..... I am from Ziar nad Hronom. Originally, I wasn't a teacher ..... or rather I was a secondary and university teacher of technically orientated schools, so Physics and Chemistry and Physics and Biochemistry. But I changed to English because of health problems. As I was working in research and my health condition was very bad and since I needed to speak English and there were few teachers of English language, I ended up at Basic School. And I have already been teaching there for six years. I like it. I mainly like it when I know that someone could say neither a word nor a sentence and

after a year they are able to communicate, they are able to say something about themselves and their family. So, this is what made me become completely involved. So, I teach the second grade at Basic School, but I have also started to teach the small ones and that's a great choice. I guess that I like the work with small children best, but those big ones are also skilful, some of them, some of them are not interested. I use different text books.

E: We'll get to that point. Thank you.

M: My name is M..... I teach at Gaštanová Basic School in Banská Bystrica. I have been actively teaching since 1990. In fact, before that, I had been teaching only Slovak language. I also taught at the first grade, but the students of higher grades, such as the seventh or eighth year, are more satisfying for me. I am also looking forward to the ninth year, I have not had them yet. We are not a specialized language school, you can find both good but also bad pupils. Till now I have enjoyed teaching English.

Mj: I am from Basic School, too. My name is Mj ..... I am from Dumbierska 17 in Banská Bystrica. And this year I am teaching from the first to the ninth year. Therefore, I teach small children as well as older ones, beginners as well as intermediate level students, and we also have special language classes so that I teach there too. And on the contrary to the previous speakers, I have been realizing that this job is really very difficult. Sometimes I feel very tired of this job because sometimes, I would say, the reaction received from some institutions is unfortunately unsatisfactory and I think that when it has started so nicely, it would be good to continue in it in the same way and to get finally some results from this work also at Basic School. But I think that children still like to learn English very much, that it is a very nice job, especially concerning the very early lessons it is delightful and pleasant work for both sides.

E: Thank you.

S: I am S..... I am from Moskovská Basic School in Banská Bystrica. This year I am also teaching at various levels from the fourth to the ninth year. I have had various kinds of teaching experience. Not only have I been teaching small children at Basic School, but I have also been teaching in the afternoons at a language school for several years ..... about six years. So, I have enough teaching experience. In fact, I haven't been teaching for longer because I could not teach for years. My major is Russian-English. And for many years we simply could not teach, it is only in recent years that we have been able to teach.

E: Thank you.

A: My name is A..... I am from Handlová and I teach at Basic School. Originally. I wasn't a teacher of English ..... I taught Russian and Music .....and at the moment I am a third year student of English at Trnavská University. So, I have been just teaching for three years. I teach from the fourth to the eighth year at Basic School. And also as the others said, I like the smaller ones more, in that fourth, fifth year; there are already some problems in the sixth, seventh year.

L: On the whole, I wouldn't say that I dislike those older ones; I have a very good group in the eighth year. It is an excellent class, it is good to work there. But I also have another group in the eighth year and from here I come out as if I have been digging . *(E: Yes, it cannot be generalized.)*

S: I also have language classes in our school, but unfortunately, from now we are not going to open new ones because they have also chosen Music and the School Authorities have decided that there cannot be Music and language classes at the same time. So, at the moment it seems to me that this generation of children ..... I have groups in the fifth year ..... I don't know whether those groups are like that only by chance, but I also feel like I am coming out of a mine when I leave those classes and I say to myself that either

these children are less interested in education ..... that they are not so interested or maybe it is caused by that change when I go from language classes to these ones ..... Certainly, it is so, so different.

E: How would you describe your job? Do you have a feeling of satisfaction, do you think that you are successful, that you are appreciated either by your students, colleagues, students' parents or by your own inner feeling of contentment? How would you describe your work?

A: For example, if I may, at the first level it is really a pleasure when a person after the lesson, after finishing it has a good feeling .....that they are looking forward to it, that they cannot wait for English, they have English only twice a week, because they play, sing and so on. Also in the higher years- in the fifth, sixth grades. Then they come to puberty so the response is not the same, so that a teacher has to bear it, s/he prepares it and I don't know where the lesson is (?). So there that satisfaction is not there. At first I think that I haven't taught anything. The satisfaction is not there ..... but again in that eighth year when they individually can already say something, then .....(?). From the parents side, there is no appreciation, but the parents are demanding, especially of those small children. I have already met with the opinion that children in the first class (need) to converse, to understand, that they don't understand the TV cartoons. So there is a great variety. But we always feel appreciated by those small children.

M: As for me, I would say that I have experienced the entire scale of emotions from great joy to deep depression. For example, sometimes I feel like a gold digger among that group of about 18 children where only two or three are capable ..... so that is like a little piece of gold. On the other hand, I can say, that they have reduced my teaching load to only 12 hours. So I go to school with pleasure and I am satisfied. What kind of feelings the children have, I don't know. Taking in consideration the parents, I would say, they are very critical towards the teachers. The fact that they are demanding is normal, but they don't take into consideration, for example, that we are not a special language class, that

there are only three lessons a week so that those results are quite adequate .....the parent just expects something more. In fact, the children like to learn English. Sometimes I am satisfied, sometimes I think that I haven' t taught them anything. *(E: Really? Is that so?)*

S: I have also experienced a similar range of different emotions. For example this year I have a special language class where there are very self-confident children. And it seems to me that they somehow appreciate my work less than, for example ..... now I have got an eighth year group where the children's knowledge is at a lower level but they respect the teacher and what s/he has prepared or..... different emotions .... like on a swing .....up and down.

L: It is the opposite with me. I have met with different responses from parents. When I started to teach, I started to teach in special language classes. Firstly, the parents claimed that I wanted too much from the children. So I consulted with other colleagues who were willing to talk and I realized that maybe sometimes those parents are right, so I reduced my demands and later I got also some other, ordinary, classes and there the parents' response was that I can teach only special language classes because I think that everyone has to know everything so that I was too demanding again. And I thought that I was not, that I was only doing what I had to, and I discussed it further. And finally I was advised to make my own plan - according to what the children felt they could manage . So I did it according to the children's abilities. Now they are in the seventh year and I teach them what they should have been taught in the sixth year and it still does not help those children. The more I reduce my demands the less both the children and the parents are interested. When I ask them to come to school to make some agreement some are not interested at all.

Mj: I think at our age teachers have got enough experience to be able to form their own opinions concerning their class, and I think that it is normal to ask of the language class everything that should be asked of talented children. That can mean vocabulary or

general understanding or conversation skills or anything .....that they can manage to cope with the knowledge of the language ..... and I think that no one can ask from (us) ..... to ask the less talented children to know only basic English and they rather use that English for their own need and they can find a word or they can find the text of songs and what they consider to be necessary and enough for themselves so that they can skip through the book or through some topics ..... to race through the year ..... but those children won't even have what we can give them. And I think that if now is a time when we can also choose from time-topic plans (?) and also from the programme what is suitable for which group, no one even from the parents' view can claim that we haven't done enough because each of us is so self-critical that s/he can assess her/himself as to what the previous school year was like and how s/he is going to continue. But I have a problem concerning the question of free time because children spend too much time watching TV and with those meaningless games. And unfortunately I think that not even in a little of what they do .... they don't receive any guidance from they parents and they are left alone too much. Because I don't know what kind of experience you have, but after watching some film, after the weekend they always tell us in warm up activities what they were doing and so on ..... So they mainly watch TV, they don't go anywhere with their parents. So I think that the scale (?) should be like the one which I give ..... if they are given something in the class, from the teacher they should use it at least a bit, practise it and finish it etc. I also think that the parents should be more critical of their own role. I mean that TV and also the family .....

M: If I could add something to it ..... it is not really connected. But just now when she was talking about that, I saw the problems in the way that teachers of English teach ..... the idea that in order to achieve good results ..... that the pupils cannot have an idea, a thought, an invention in Slovak ..... The truth is that they cannot create it in Slovak so that they cannot produce it in the foreign language. I can see it there. During competitions I realize that some children when they do role play, they cannot simply react in Slovak, they cannot express themselves, there is the problem that it is more

difficult for us to want them to create something.

E: So the improvement of creativity through other subjects would help English.

L: Certainly. For example, we were doing descriptions of rooms, and I realized that they were also doing it in the Slovak lesson at the same time. I was just unhappy because of those English texts which they had produced and the teacher of the Slovak language said that it had been the same in Slovak.

E: Z....., would you like to add something? For example you have said that you like this job?

Z: Yes, but at the same time I agree with ideas of my colleagues that really .....that certainly we aren't always satisfied with everything and mainly I would say with the lack of appreciation ..... yes, from the side from where it should come. So that it is often negative motivation that we feel ..... there are no responses, even though there is a good feeling from the students' side ..... But we also need something from the other side, yes, because we have to live and we often divide our attention in too many directions. Because you have to think carefully, completely, simply roughly to survive and unfortunately the reality is that we all are teachers, so we are familiar with this. This also influences our feelings quite often, yes, negative feelings that *(everyone comments at the same time)* it is beautiful (?) itself and also sometimes if I had a feeling, as my colleague said, that I cannot succeed all the time as I wish but I learn from it, yes, I am simply thinking, why, because we don't succeed all the time and .....for example we cannot always prepare good food ..... the type of food which is so great that everyone can only praise it .....but on another occasion we know that we left something out, yes? So it is the same, it can be the atmosphere or the weather, different details can have their effect and I am thinking why. So I try, if something has gone wrong, to learn from it and next time to try something else and I can simply state that since I started to teach, my lessons have been changing, by the way I write about it in my work ..... I have chosen this topic,

that one really can learn all the time, I feel it like that. Maybe ..... those children, if we see what they are interested in (because the children had completely different interests ten years ago than what we have today) .... so we have to adapt to them. And then there is no problem if I am adaptable, yes, simply if we want to find the same 'language' so I think that we can find it with these children.

S: I want to say that in my case what can really make me disgusted is for example that this new fifth year group which I have, it is such a lively class that they cannot sit quietly for a moment. But once I shocked them. My glasses broke so that I came without them and they were quiet for ten minutes. Afterwards I said to their teacher: ' You know what? I finally know what to do with them, I always have to shock them.' But what shall I do to shock them each lesson? What is the motivation then when the children are not willing, when they are not interested, when they are not paying attention? This is the most demotivating question for me. If they are already not interested, what shall I do next?

Mj: The problem is, as my colleague said, that if one had less of those duties, those things which we have to manage in a day, which are sometimes in third or fourth place ..... if we had more time and also an adequate financial reward. And the next ten .....or I don't know how much you manage, because you simply have to fulfil them in spite of your feeling that you want to concentrate on this but ..... and this is that extreme ..... that first nothing was taught, it was suppressed and there is that boom (?) which still lasts, fortunately, but it is also on behalf of the spiritual convenience and relaxation ..... and one feels it.

E: I think that we have come to course materials little by little.Because they surely play some important role, don't they? In fact, they are something that we use everyday. And what materials do you use? Could you say something about that, how long have you been using them, how satisfied are you with them?

Mj: I can begin because I have now reached the point where I am assessing everything

..... I am thinking about everything ..... it seems to me that I spend too long doing it. I used ..... I use and I am starting to use some textbooks which are worse ..... and others which are quite good. All of them have one thing in common though ..... and it is that we can choose among .....that there is enough material .....Of course, some of them are better, some are worse etc. What makes me think, and I have been going back to it since September or the beginning of August, is that the work after the language (presentation) part, it means when we finish five weeks of games, listening, playing, speaking, oral production or physical activities with those children ..... then I personally miss some more fluency (activities) or easier (activities) crossing to the textbook itself. Particularly to the textbook as material. It seems to me whether it is "Tip Top", "Project" or it is "Discoveries" or more recently "Open Doors", that the textbook has a horrible beginning. At the beginning there are already types of questions which are difficult for Slovak children who have just been playing and reciting rhymes to understand ..... And suddenly they are there, in that book. And now they have to read after a while, to write, to find out the phonetic rule .....that what they say is not equivalent to the written form. And these first beginnings, those first units, I would say ..... they should be more developed into more varied exercises to help them to get slowly into that reading and writing. This is what I feel that I miss. Because when the English write, those native speakers, English is easy for them .....since the child who is learning is situated in English surroundings. And here, it seems to me ..... I can see it in those fifth and third years that it is difficult for them. They also say: "How difficult that English is! How easy it was and how difficult it is now!". To read, to write the phonetic transcriptions is a complete horror for them.

Z: If I can say ..... for example I do it like this; when I do the introductory oral activities ..... I don't know but I think that it would be probably because there is a huge amount of teachers who don't do it. And there are really some like that even at our school and I know that also in this region there are many teachers who really on the first day enter the classroom with the textbook and they immediately start to teach with that textbook I

don't know whether you know that but that's the reality. But I don't want to speak about that. In fact, I want to speak about how I do my oral activities. Of course, I collected ideas from the materials of Mrs. Tandlichová. I think that her introductory course is very good, very well done. And many steps that I was already teaching from her new textbook, I have been using till this day.

E: Does it mean that you combine two textbooks?

Z: Yes, I do. And I focus the introductory oral activities on the vocabulary which is in the first "Project English" or also in the second or third one. And in fact, we start to work with the textbook when children already know most of the vocabulary. They already know it. I write with them what they want to write. And only the amount which is pleasant for them. So that we also write. It is basically the case of the fifth year. In the third year, there we have started to write sooner. With them sooner because it is the first time I have had a third year who have been already studying English for a year, two years, three or four years. So they simply want to write. Moreover, how can I avoid writing with them if they were already writing in the first class. Quite simply, this is an extra third year.

E: What kind of materials do you use with them?

Z: I have brought them to show you. It is a new book called "English Parade". I wanted to use "Chatterbox". But in the first and second year , approximately a half of them have already done it. And when I said that we can decide together what textbook we are going to use because I wanted to offer them "Chatterbox", they declared that they had already used that textbook for a year or two ..... one little girl had been even using it in both years and she had two of those books at home. And when I mentioned "Chatterbox", they simply felt disgusted. So I went to a parents' meeting and I brought to show them a book which I had borrowed from Albion .... I don't know whether you know it. It is completely

new. I have to admit that I haven't tried it yet. I use it, in fact, I am just starting to use it now. And when we had a course concerning a specialized study of young learners in Stará Turá, Evka and Paul were there and they brought it there as a novelty. I borrowed it from them and I admit that I like this book very much. Originally, I thought it would be a suitable book for the second year because last year I was teaching the first class the first time and I thought, you can have a look, this is the workbook, teacher's book, student's book and I also have cassettes of course. So I am starting to use it. We have only had it for two weeks. We were waiting for quite a long time because I first ordered them from Nitra. But we did not receive any response from there and then, fortunately, I contacted Evka and she told me that they had it in Albion. And they sent them from Albion quite quickly. So I have been using it for the second week.

Mj: And can I ask? Z..... when you use .... you know that you are going to use "Project English", you do the vocabulary as part of the oral activities for "Project English". (Z:Yes.) and when you use "Discoveries" then the same for "Discoveries". So you have different variations for each course which you start?

Z: Yes, in fact yes. You know what? I would say that basically for each, you have for example ..... You can find those in both "Discoveries" and "Project English". You can see it here at the beginning.

Mj: But I mean only that transfer, I am not thinking of anything in particular.

Z: No, but I concentrate on when the book *(someone comments)* is starting to be used too, when the teacher is starting to use it because you can see it here - "I am Mandy. I am from London". You know. So, we are introducing ourselves in the first lessons, "What is your name?", yes? Gradually because I remember it from the time when I was working as a methodologist that the teachers were always complaining that it was too difficult for their pupils, they asked how to teach them. I can really tell you that I managed to teach it

to the children without any problems in introductory oral activities. And how? I believe that you all encourage playing in a circle. And I say that we will play in the circle with a ball and firstly we introduce ourselves to each other and later we add more things. We practise absolutely everything and not only practising, also learning. It might be pronouns, names of countries. When we already know "What is your name?", we add "Where are you from?" We begin with our own town, where we are from. Later we add any town, yes, anything. Then the children also want to be from some different town, not only from Slovakia so that we add some other town that they choose. I never want them to choose too much. Everyone can choose but they are supposed to learn only their own ones. Yes, for example. London, anything but I don't want each of them e.g. when I have a group of 24 pupils, you know, to learn her/his own.

E: I'm sorry to interrupt you. This is more a matter of methodology of how you work with those children. (Z: It is a preparation.) I will go back. You use this book which the others don't know in fact. Could I ask L....., what do you use?

L: For the little ones, for the third year, I use "Splash". I have just started to use it, so I don't know it well, I haven't used it before. But till this moment the small third graders like it and they are not real beginners. They used "Toy Box" - that picture book- in the first and second year. Yes, so we have already used that one, in fact, they used it with me in the second year, this "Toy Box". We were just playing, talking, it means - vocabulary- .....We did not even try to create something except to introduce themselves, to say what they like and what they are holding in their hands. Those were the only sentences they managed to learn, to say in the second year. And now, as in the third year, they could not wait to have their real textbooks, where they can find something written. So, they already have them and they like them very much. And now, they are not interested very much in what is written there because the books are so wonderfully illustrated. And they offer the possibility to converse and the children understand very well since they are used to it so that we talk about those pictures and then we look at the written word. And we also try to write it.

E: Can I .....?

A: I was also using this book "Splash" for two years at the first level and now we changed it to "Chatterbox" and I think, I was satisfied and I think that so were the children with the original textbook, and we like this "Chatterbox", too. I haven't gone through the whole book, but I like the songs very much, they are very nice so that I am satisfied. Before we had this textbook, I had been using Tandlichová. And mainly the oral activities ..... I like the way they are organized there and finance was the biggest problem at the first level because we had to buy those "Splashes" since there were some problems, but now we managed it somehow due to the fact that these "Chatterboxes" were prescribed by the Ministry of Education so that we solved it. At the second level I use "Discoveries" books, but I am thinking about changing them to "Project English" since we have them at school. But there is one problem and it is the fact that we are an eight year gymnasium and supposedly we should have only the best students and whether they manage to reach the same level because the levels vary, it is questionable. My colleague, for example went back to Tandlichová, she has "Discoveries", but it is...

(a small part of the discussion was not recorded as the tape was changed)

S: *(cut-off at the beginning)* ...much better there, as the native speakers use, no ... it is different. For example, I wouldn't go back to those old textbooks because of the vocabulary. That vocabulary and the book ..... it seems to me these books are nicely illustrated, too. What our students miss is something like the glossary of "Discoveries" ....it is missing in "Project English" *(someone comments)* Is there a glossary? Yes? So, I have to ....I have to buy it or I have to recommend them to buy it because to look for a word in a big dictionary, it is for them, for the fifth year a problem. I personally have never spent too much time writing with that age. I was writing some words and then I gave them some to write for homework. And now I still write the words with this group and I don't consider it as a waste of time because in that group *(someone gives her a*

book) ..... it is here, all right, thank you and can I get it here in Albion? (L: Yes, I just bought it there.) And how much is it? I would immediately ask them to buy it. (L: 31 crowns.) It would be much better to work with that one.

L: I would also add something. I was also using Tandlichová, I use "Project English", too. In fact, I was and still I am using it because I use it with the fifth year, the seventh and the eighth year at the moment, and I left out the sixth because I use "Go". And if I have to compare them, I would choose "Go". At The moment. *(E: Why?)* Because there are no songs in "Project English". Moreover, I can't sing. And in the textbooks, in those ones that offer songs, the songs are on the cassettes. So that we can manage it nicely because we can learn the vocabulary, we can learn the pronunciation.And singing ....those children who can sing learn to sing with that cassette. "Project English" does not have anything like that. Knowledge is too difficult, better to say too difficult for the amount of time, to make the teacher search for other songs, create material, possibly for those records and to expand the lessons with them. So, I miss it in "Project" .....

S: I think the same that for the fifth year, for the beginners who are a weaker group, that it is easier to use "Discoveries" than "Project". "Project" is very suitable for special language classes. When I changed "Chatterbox", I changed it to "Project".

L: I completely agree with that because my selective language classes have had no problems with "Project". Whereas I have started to teach the fifth year, such a mixed group, but better to say weaker, and there are those problems, I have told you that we are in the sixth year in terms of knowledge, despite the fact that they are already in the seventh year. So, at the moment I am considering using "Go", due to my experience and those songs. But not only because of those songs. I have also found the exercises to be sufficient .....that you can divide your group according to the students' abilities and you can make them work in different ways during one lesson. So that there are also exercises which can be done by the weakest students, but there are also exercises which only the

best students manage to do.

Mj: But I have found out that there are not enough of those exercises in "Project". It seems to me, that there are only a few exercises and the grammar is not for the average children at all.

S: And what I miss there, it is the lack of materials. We should improve reading, it seems to me that there is not enough for reading.

L: In "Project", not in the first one, but in the second one there is.

Mj: Now I am just beginning to use "Open Doors". It is a bit better organized. The vocabulary is also there .... there is a comparison of abilities . There are more exercises. There is even a part dealing with projects and with reading, so that it is better in that respect. But I can say that the beginning is more fluent in "Discoveries". But later it becomes wordy. There isn't enough grammar. When I finish a year or a book I ask the children for feedback, and they always say there are not enough exercises, that the grammar is difficult .... they also complain about tests where the biggest problem for Slovak children ..... at least as I see it .... is forming questions. And in those tests the whole examination is based on questions, so they mainly have to complete the questions or grammar structures which are not required in any exercise ..... there is only a "language corner" and an ordinary grammar review. And they don't realize the connection and that they have to practise it a bit. If there were more of those exercises, or if they were somehow related to each other ..... that grammar would be possible (especially in the green book) ... it would possibly be manageable. That green book seems to me to be too difficult.

M: *(asked by E. to speak)* We use "Discoveries" and "Project" too. I would add to those .... to the lack of exercises concerning "Project" that it is in grammar practice and it

should be at the back of the book; in "Discoveries" it is well done .... there are extended oral exercises at the back. So it is a question of money. Only three or four children buy that practice book and it is not enough and it becomes useless for us. There are some excellent exercises which are exactly about the topic and they are helpful from the point of view of grammar. But I personally miss, both in "Discoveries" and "Project", jazz chants, rhymes and songs. And it also would be good to include some revision lessons as in "Discoveries" after each unit because they are too long. Some revision lessons with more interesting activities. And I was comparing "Discoveries" books and I have come to the conclusion that the first one is the least successful .... it is mainly because of grammar ... in fact the verb *to be* is repeated from the first to the twelfth unit. And in spite of this, in the end the children don't know it at all. The question 'Do you want?' ..... it means the full verb ..... is mentioned for the first time in the thirteenth unit. Then *to be* is repeated again till the eighteenth unit. Then finally there is *have got*. Then *Do you* is repeated in the 24th unit and then *can* together with the present continuous. So it means that we go through the simple present and the present continuous ..... and it is very poor.

E: To change the topic, from your own experience could you characterize an ideal English textbook, a book of high quality? What kind of book would you like to use? You have already mentioned those songs for example .... What would be an ideal, good quality textbook?

A: I think that something that we wouldn't have to supplement. Because, for example, I am satisfied with "Discoveries", but there is not enough of those grammar exercises and I have to supply them. And if I want to make the lesson more lively, for example with those songs, the ideal book would have to include everything that there should be to make the teacher's life easier.

M: And maybe also to improve the units with some alternative exercises that are both more and less difficult .... and the teacher can say, for example : "You can do that. You can do this". And I would already have it in my hands .... I wouldn't have to look for or

prepare and copy anything. I would have everything in one place.

Mj: There is also a problem that we always have to distinguish between very talented children in special language classes and those in ordinary classes. Therefore, I think there should be one type of textbook and course for special language classes and another for ordinary classes to prevent them being handicapped because they are not in a special language class. I think that each of us uses the coursebook together with "Hello" or some exercises. But in my opinion there should be a unit based just on oral practice at the beginning , and that this oral practice should be connected to the main textbook and should include songs, rhymes and so on. Then a part of the first reading and writing activities would be linked. .... also the necessary grammar to prevent the children being divided according to who could afford the materials. And after, some conversation topics could be added, and projects, since children like working on projects. And then those alternative exercises might follow so that cleverer children could go on reading .... and then we could also use some paperback books ....

M: I would like to add my opinion about "Project English" . When I open it, when we are going to work with it, those long instructions 'jump out' at me in many exercises. And I have to explain them to pupils and it takes time. And now the "Splash" programme has come ..... "Snapshot" I also mix with "Splash" ..... "Snapshot" for the ninth year. I've just had a look at it and it seems to me to be well organized; on one page there is a text with related *Listen, Speak, Write* and what else? *(someone comments: Listening, Speaking, Reading)*. For example those (?) are completely clear to me, there are those exercises ..... On page 60, for example, I remember one that is absolutely clear ..... and I would say well-organized. In "Project English" there are too many exercises. And in fact all of them are similar. Here for example *(shows the book)* .... there is a text here and those activities. I can choose .... some children can do these and others can do those. It seems to me well arranged.

E: So it means that instructions play an important role too .

Z: Yes, you could say that. I think that an ideal book does not exist since all of us are different..... each of us has a certain personality, different things suit us. So I admit that I personally like "Project English" very much. Of course I started to teach with traditional textbooks. Then the "Project" series came. I started to use "Project" in 1991, but since "Discoveries" was the recommended book, we received them and I used them. Maybe because I had started using "Project" ..... I don't want to say that "Discoveries" is not a good book, but it did not suit me *(others comment)* ..... the reason is the one which you have all said. Yes .... that grammar. The structure *Do you want?* or *Do you?* is mentioned there .... but the full verb is mentioned in only one unit. And there is no exercise for practising it. But it is interesting for children. In my opinion "Discoveries" could be a very suitable book for children living in English-speaking countries. .... but not in Slovakia where children have only two or three lessons a week. In fact for a child who receives English from outside ..... Yes? ..... in the street, in the shop, simply everywhere .... among children. But I personally miss a system of grammar very much. And I can also share with you some experiences from teaching at secondary school. I met children who had been using "Project" and .... I don't exaggerate ... they knew three or four times more than children using "Discoveries". I was teaching at the English gymnazium for about a year and there, I can tell you , there are very clever and intelligent children; and one girl from my class .... she wanted to leave the school. After studying English for four years she did not know the simple past tense. When she came there, the others were already in the fifth year. So the pace of learning is really fast there. We managed to reach the level of the Basic School in a month, month and a half, maximum two months. And it was not only the past simple, it was also the present perfect, past perfect, conditionals and similar things and she didn't even know the past simple. She was so shocked and stressed that she just wanted to leave. So I gave her some consultation lessons.. I told her to think about it carefully, and so on. Everything that I told her she was able to do. She was really very clever, very skilful ..... she managed to overcome it. And of course she likes it very

much now. What I want to say is that you have to add to that book very much, you have to supplement it with many exercises. Personally, during the two years that I was using it, I persuaded the parents to buy "Project" for the children, and I changed it because I saw that the children are able to achieve much more than I can give them according to that textbook. Since the book did not practise the previously mentioned grammar structure, it was not enough that I explained it to them (maybe three times) that questions in the simple present are expressed with *do* and *does* in the third person. If I tell it to them and we don't practise it, or we just practise it in two or three lessons and they won't come across it for the next month ... it is worth nothing. So I was not satisfied with that textbook, mainly because of that, but also because of my secondary school experience ..... I was teaching at secondary business school and I can say that there were children who after studying English for four years reached intermediate level. They were really great and I could communicate with them in English, but it was the case of only 3 or 4 students, and I had 24 of them in a group. (S: Were you teaching this in ordinary classes or only in special language classes?). Only in language classes.

S: Because I have an opposite experience in special language classes .... in fact a good experience.

Z: In fact I don't say that it isn't good. I am saying that it doesn't suit me at all.

E: So in your opinion "Project" is an example of a good quality textbook?

Z: No. It just suits me. But I don't say that it suits every teacher. I think it is good that we are able to choose .... that there are more textbooks, and if there is a book which the teacher finds suitable, it would be good to be able to use it.

E: Can I ask you how you characterize a good quality book?

L: I use mainly "Project". And I started to use "Go" in the fifth grade last year. There are also some younger children who use "Project", there are those older ones who were already using it ..... and the younger ones came and they started to use "Go". Those older ones using "Project" were very satisfied, but there are several of them who have various textbooks at home. And now they are looking at the books of the younger children, and they would prefer "Go". And I will tell you why ... what the children say. It is not my own opinion but I feel for them. Partly there are those songs and partly there are many texts about celebrities, film stars, pop singers or sportsmen. You can always find something interesting that children are familiar with, maybe from current TV programmes. And they discuss it because they are not interested in listening any more about Michael's grandmother who lives in Italy or somewhere else, because their grandmother does not live in such places ..... she lives in the same town. What can they brag about when they spend their holiday with their grandmother who lives in the next street? So they can read about those famous people, discuss them and try to ask each other questions. Those books are up-to-date. Not like in "Project". There is nothing about those celebrities. In the second part the pupils like .... *(people comment at the same time)* ..... very much.

E: (to A....) Can I ask you ...? What is your idea about a good quality textbook? What should it include?

A: I have already answered that.

E: OK. And now we can go to the last question. You should conclude somehow by saying whether you think the teaching of English is easier or more difficult nowadays, when compared with the past. Most of you taught before and teach now. Or only if you compare the last few years. Is it easier? Is it more difficult?. Why? How have all these changes influenced the teaching of English?

S: Taking into consideration the availability of materials, it seems to me easier because we have a much better choice of textbooks and recordings. But it seems to me more difficult too .... maybe because of changes in groups of students or loss of special

language classes. Because I think that children are influenced more by the lack of stimulus at home, by the hours spent in front of TV and computers. It seems to me that year by year it is more difficult to teach .... that if there is a lack of interest in education, then education is not valued very much. And because of this it is more difficult to teach.

L: I completely agree with you because I began teaching just after the revolution when children were eager to gain knowledge. They came to see me during breaks saying: "Teacher, I have read in a magazine that ..." or "They said this in a film that I have seen....". Or they found some songs or the names of songs *(S. comments)* and they were asking what they meant, why they were written like that. Now they are not really interested.

S: The interest of parents has also decreased. Formerly everybody questioned me, there were queues of parents after the first parents' meeting. Now nobody asks me anything.

M: I think not only English teachers, but also teachers of other subjects would say that children were different before. But the type of life meant that children were more passive and less creative. I do not think that teaching is more difficult ... because you can hear English everywhere. And they are interested in those songs, for example those (?). So it is easier for me.

Z: I could say what I have found more difficult in comparison to the last five or seven years. It is the fact that anyone who can speak English a bit nowadays is a teacher. And we now teach the little ones. Last year I had them for the first time, so I hadn't had any experience with this age group. I had been teaching the third year as the lowest level before, and they were attending my lessons ..... last year one of my colleagues expressed it in a very apt way ..... like blank slates. They simply did not know anything. So I did everything I wanted to with them. And I was the only one who was teaching them. It is true that sometimes the parents tended to interfere, but we made an agreement that it

didn't matter if the child forgot something ..... and it became easier later. Now the children come from ..... you don't want to humiliate that colleague who was teaching them ..... and quite often these people only know three or five units. And they teach them horrible pronunciation .... /e buk/ (?) is a book, and so on. Maybe you have faced this problem. And there is a young pupil from the first year who comes to see you, and she starts to shout it out ..... in fact she starts to teach the other children because they are like a sponge. I think of this in a positive way .... the fact that what they hear they pick up immediately. But it also has negative effects ..... It's a great pity that those who are in a position to think about it .... they really don't think and they allow anyone to teach with impunity. I think that these people who are allowed to teach inflict terrible damage on children. This is my opinion. You can agree or disagree with me. I think that there has to be the most qualified teacher for the smallest children. Because if we teach those little ones something which is not right, they will learn it. When they are older, we can see ..... yes, that in those classes it is difficult to teach them something. If we teach a weak student something which is wrong, then unfortunately we will never teach him what is right. It was easier for me to get a child as a "blank slate" than it is today, when they come and ..... I can't humiliate my colleague, yes? ..... I have met with the opposite case, but I am simply not able to do it .... So I cannot say ..... 'You have to be very careful .... Try to teach her/him again and to tell him that it should be like this .....' . Not even we Slovaks speak equally or similarly, but I see a much bigger difficulty in this ....

A: We have the same problem, namely we have four Basic Schools and there isn't any qualified teacher. In fact, I am a student too. Maybe it is an advantage for me that I was studying Russian as a foreign language, I mean methodology and so on. But now a young girl who has just finished gymnazium teaches with me, and there is also one who teaches German . They both really try their best, but I agree with the idea that if the children are taught incorrectly it is difficult to change it afterwards.

E: So you have been speaking more about the relationship with other teachers. If we

have a look at materials, availability of materials, of textbooks. Is your job easier or more difficult from this point of view?

S: According to availability easier, but according to cost more difficult.

Z: I would say it like this .... you have to pay for them out of your own pocket. And it is more difficult because ..... it would be perfect ..... I had a short stay abroad in Denmark organized by the Tempus programme. It is common there that in the schools there is a big room where you can find a photocopier. Each teacher who needs to copy something makes her own copies. Most of us have a great collection of perfect materials, but unfortunately only we have them ..... I am unable to pass them on to the children. For example today I was writing a test with them .... but the machine is broken, possibly permanently .... because there were two of them and now none of them can be repaired. So I was dictating and what I could have managed in 10 minutes took 30 minutes. It think it's a meaningless waste of time ..... So we are starting to confront completely different problems from in the past. We have materials, excellent materials but .....

S: The same thing happened to me. I started to write tests and the machine broke down. Now I have to ask pupils in another class: 'Can you give this to your parents and ask them if they can make 18 or 36 copies? And I will get some material for you from another class'. And in this way I have to beg favours from parents.

M: May I add something? *(E: Go ahead)* When I compare myself as a teacher of English with teachers of German, I think we have a great time. We have seminars, many meetings .... from the beginning we can hear ...(?) .... I think that the British Council and everything concerning teaching English ..... that they care for us very well. The teachers of German don't have anything really. I think we are able to make choices. There are always offers so that we can improve ourselves and our teaching. From time to time ....

S: What I really don't like in the school year concerns the (special) language classes ....

How is it possible that they cut the number of hours by one hour? It's complete nonsense. The main foreign language stayed the same - three hours a week - but the second language has been reduced. And I don't know the reason ..... is it because there is a shortage of foreign language teachers? I don't know what other reasons there might be.

L: Can I add something? The opposite happened at our school. You said that it is true (?) that they reduced the second language..... but for example I have got a group in their seventh year .... it is a special language class and they have been studying English since third grade .... and they chose their second language in the fifth grade. Now they are in their seventh year and we have only two lessons a week, but they have three lessons of German (Z: It depends on the school) ..... But nobody has asked me *(others comment)* . Nobody has asked me.

S: *(inaudible)* ..... this school year that the first language should be given more hours than the second one.

Z: But our headmaster has discussed it with other foreign language teachers ..... also the teacher of German, because we teach at a language school and they agreed that we want children to have three lessons of the first language since they don't know either of them properly ... do they? So it is like that at our school .... (L: And it's the opposite at ours).

L: And something else about those tests ..... It has happened to me .... because we have been writing tests recently .... that children came to me and said: 'Teacher, we have found out that they can copy those tests for us in the town, and it will cost 5 crowns for each of us.... so we can give you the 5 crowns and you can bring us copies of the tests.'

S: They have said the same to me .... but I have already been collecting money for magazines. So should I now collect for the tests too?

L: They have just decided .....

Mj: I would like to add something (E: Go ahead) that has been most satisfying for me. It does not refer to materials or textbooks in particular, but it is the fact that the gate of creativity has been opened. I felt restricted before by those ..... teaching plans *(laughing)*..... God, I'm tired .... excuse me..... And now from those projects and from those children you can dig out something which is personal .... and I get on well with project work. I have to be happy because even the children who don't produce anything ..... suddenly they bring in something wonderful, personal .... and they can express it in English. So the comparison between the past and the present has brought a nice result ..... that creativity is really open, and each child is creative .... only the level of creativity is different.

E: Thank you very much. Each of you has a chance to sum up because I have no more questions.

Z: I have heard it said several times (here?) that today's children are not creative. I wouldn't agree with this opinion. I think that children are very creative. But quite often we direct them saying: 'Go this way'. And if we don't allow them to spread their wings and fly where they want ..... I think that projects give them an opportunity to do this, and show them that they can express themselves. My own experience is that children are very creative ..... we just have to encourage them to be so from early childhood. Now after those three years when I came back to Basic School I got the seventh and the eighth year ... who I was teaching as if they were the third and fourth year. So they have changed their system completely and I'm starting again ....

(end of tape)

APPENDIX K: TRANSCRIPT OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW, DOLNY KUBIN GYMNAZIUM (translated from Slovak original by Z.Molcanova)

D: (in English) Today is Wednesday 19th November and this is the tape of the focus group conducted by Jozef Medvecky.

T: My name is T..... I teach at the Dolny Kubin Gymnazium. This is my third year. I hadn't taught anywhere else before I came here after my university studies. I had a break for one year but I didn't work. What else?

J: Have you taught any other subjects?

T: No. Only English. From the beginning only English. Only this subject.

E: I am E..... I have been teaching at the gymnazium for two years, but in elementary schools generally for seven years, in fact eight. I am not a (qualified?) teacher, but now I am just finishing studying English at the Pedagogical Faculty. I am an engineer and because there was a shortage of teachers and I quite enjoy it, I became a teacher. I haven't been teaching any other subjects; in fact eight years only English language.

V: My name is V..... I teach at the gymnazium. I have been teaching for about three months. I came here directly ... straight from grammar school. So I don't have a university education or pedagogical education, but I have the State Exam in English language. I teach only this subject.

A: I am A..... I have been teaching at the gymnazium for three months. I began to teach immediately after graduating from university. In fact I also had a year's break: during that year I didn't work and now I have been teaching for three months. I teach only English language ..... I don't teach other subjects and hadn't taught them before.

J: Good. Well. If you could say something about the school. What are your feelings? If you are satisfied ... if you are receiving ..... Do you feel appreciation from your school, from your students? Are you satisfied with yourself? Have you got any support from anybody, or do you feel lonely in your teaching? In fact, what is it like in the classroom? Something about these feelings ...

A: I think that quite a big problem ... in fact it's my problem .... is that the teaching load is very high. So the work is not done, of course. It is not possible to do it properly.

J: How many hours?

A: I have 28 hours. I also teach the lower classes, the first and the third grades, because this is an 8-year gymnazium, and I hadn't expected at all that I would be teaching such small children. I have a lot of problems to get used to teaching younger students. They require a different approach, different from that which the older students require. Somebody else should try them ...

J: That doesn't have to be an order .....

T: I also agree with the problem of high teaching loads ..

J: How many hours have you got?

T: 28 also. So if I really wanted to do something more, or if I felt that I needed to do more .. if I had a need to prepare something without that student book, I would not manage it. It also happens that I neglect some classes or students because they are slower. There is simply no time. And then, concerning support for languages ..... at this school every subject is treated the same as one another. There is a tendency here to have as few problems as possible. But there are also problems in getting books and other material which we need apart from the usual students' books. Simply, the attitude is like this : you must be satisfied with just one book, the same as the other teachers of the other

subjects.

V: I have a lower teaching load. I have only got 27 hours so I have more time for preparation and I can think more about particular classes .... I can think what to do with the students. Concerning classes, I also prefer working with the older students, because communication there is already better . Those smaller classes need more patience. Concerning appreciation from the school, I think I am satisfied.

E: My teaching load was 31 hours including my own class. So there was no time. I couldn't see any difference between older or younger ones. I would like to teach both age groups. Each age group has got its own charm. And it is important to be strong enough to be able to fight for one's opinions and to get through all the demands concerning English language at the school; it is important to be strong enough to fight for some material or something, because in general not much is given to languages.

J: There is no money for anything .....

D: (in English) I just want to say that during the interview, if people want to make comments whenever they feel like it ..... It does not have to be so formal. OK? It is like a conversation. People can say what they like .....

J: This is just for the beginning ..... Well, let's consider these things. I am glad that you have got teachers' feelings right (?) .... that you know where the problems are .... that they are in these huge teaching loads and that the teaching profession is not appreciated in general. And how do you regard foreign textbooks? We all teach from them and, mostly, we have "Headway" ... some people have "Blueprint", "Project English". So if you could say something about your feelings concerning these books .... if you like them. We have some questions here such as who chooses these materials (in fact we make this decision) .... how we agree among ourselves ... how we agree with the students. According to the choice of the teacher, there aren't any financial restrictions .... Yes? ..... if we are able to persuade students to buy them, and if parents want to give the money to the students. So, specifically, which books do you like more .... which are more suitable, and what makes them suitable? What don't you like ..... in which books is the grammar unsuitable and things like this? What are your feelings about these books? You

have "Headway"....

T: I do have "Headway" and I don't know the other textbooks. Well, I do know "Grapevine" ..... I can compare it with "Headway", but so far I like "Headway" more. I am just getting to know it better (I mean the whole series) because it is new .... there is a mix of everything ..... grammar, listening, reading, activities for writing ..... simply everything and at a suitable level. Even the articles are quite interesting, articles for students ..... most students starting to learn English can appreciate them. Maybe for older students these textbooks are sometimes ..... the theme or subject matter of those texts and the things they deal with ..... simply they are not very (suitable?) for them ..... not so suitable because the things mentioned there ..... Western values ..... in our country these articles simply do not say anything. Some articles which I think can be interesting, there is simply no response from the students. But otherwise they are good for teaching ..... and of course they have teachers' books where everything is explained. So if I compare it ("Headway") with "Grapevine"', "Grapevine" is a book focussed on an intensive course: there are many dialogues, many questions ..... they would have to have very frequent lessons to improve their level. If it is only two days a week, they progress only very slowly, but they go deeper, so ....

E: I also think that "Grapevine"' is based on dialogues. You have no fluent text there .... the children are able to ask questions ....

T: There are no texts, they are missing. There is no listening. Children have no experience with longer texts ..... so they do not understand longer texts. In fact we have finished with these textbooks. The "Headway" series is a little better. There is more in it.

J: And that series is more complex ....

T: Yes, it is complex .... and you can adjust it to different classes, so it is suitable.

A: Those elementary (books?) as well ... they are very good, I think. But to a certain extent those blue "'Headways", the intermediate ones ..... some conversations, some themes are too general and broad ..... it even takes the students' interest away .... they have nothing to say.

T: But I think, sorry ..... (J: That new one) ..... that "Headway Intermediate", that new one, I like more than the old one. The old one was quite ..... The new one has got .... It tries to be more accessible for secondary level ..... it is more interesting and has got more activities in it. But the old one had quite difficult texts. I don't know if it is better for me to teach from , but sometimes it is more suitable for adults. There are topics ... I don't know .... such as bank loans, job experiences, which are simply not interesting for the students. These themes are probably the biggest problem in the intermediate book. As well as this, there is very complex grammar.

A: It is demanding.

T: Yes, it is difficult. And listening ..... there is a problem with listening. In those intermediate books the listening (material) is difficult. We need to work on it. The teachers' book doesn't really explain how to do it better.

J: We need a teaching load of 19 hours to do it.

T: Yes

J: Or else sessions like this where we can sit and speak about how we would prepare a particular theme, what each of us would do.

T: It would be good.

E: I think that none of us is a slave to the book. Even if the topic is not good or so suitable for students we can do a lot with it.

T: Yes.

E: The vocabulary is very similar for each topic and you can adapt it. I think we will not find a better book than "Headway".

J: Tana means that it is necessary to work on it, and that if it then doesn't mean much to students, that she doesn't have any inspiration .....

T: If there were more time ....

E: Sometimes it isn't possible to manage the timing of the lesson according to their plan ..... not with groups of 21 or 22 ...

V: I don't know. I don't have any experience with any books. And with "Headway" ..... because I wasn't taught how to teach ..... these teachers' books help me. They help me to know what to do with the students, in fact.

E: I can make a comparison with "Blueprint" . For example at Business Secondary Schools teachers don't approve of "Headway" books ..... they find them difficult and complicated for students, and so I think they are appropriate books for the gymnazium. A certain amount of thinking is required and a greater capability on the part of the students. Probably in other places there is a different system ..... students learn in different ways. I do not think that the other students are less intelligent, but that "Blueprint" is better for those schools with a special focus, and that "Headway" forces students to think, and also that creativity and everything ....

J: In general "Headway" ....

E: Those texts are not fictional, but they are real. In fact they are old but direct ..... they are real life, something that happened ....

A: I started with "Blueprint" in the third grade at the 8-year gymnazium .... so with complete beginners, but that book is not very difficult. But from the point of view of age it doesn't suit them. However, I think it is good to work with. I was afraid that it would not be possible to combine it with the planned number of lessons ..... those lessons take more time for me to do with the students. Because the lessons are shorter in "Blueprint" , when they are planned for two hours I do them in two hours. In general they seem to be good.

J: Does anybody use "Streetwise"?

A: "Streetwise" is used by my colleague.

J: So, I have a question ..... whether these books are prepared with regard for Slovak users.

E: I think that they are generally ...

A: I think that Italians, Japanese, Spanish people use them ....

J: Because these specific textbooks are used so often, people say they are empty from a cultural point of view ..... they are so general (in order to be used by everyone) that they lack that cultural aspect from particular countries. So we also have to somehow supplement this .....

E: Maybe these "Project English" books can't really be compared either from the point of view of students, or from the point of view of teaching.But I think that these books are typical and suitable for the younger students ..... they fully develop their creativity and I simply can't imagine better books for them. (I mean for elementary schools and 8-year

gymnazia & beginner classes..)

J: So can we conclude with our general impressions of these books? We have said here that we know that they are not ideal and perfect, that it is necessary to adapt them, and we know approximately what to do with them .... that we should adapt them and that we will never have ideal books. There is also a question ..... what you would (according to your experience) describe as a good quality textbook ..... how you would qualify a good foreign language textbook ..... we should generalize these things ..... what it should have in general, what it should contain, how it should be organized. Let's try to have a look at what is a good textbook.

E: We are very influenced right now ....

J: It is difficult to say, isn't it?

E: Difficult.

A: So, if we could stick to the basic skills ..... in fact during the lesson we can do everything .... listening, reading, writing ..... the four basic skills..... if there would be more of them, because the sentences are in general grammatical (?) ..... if it would be possible to work only with grammar while the others (?) are focussed only on articles, reading, listening .....

E: For 45 minute lessons I think it won't be possible to make a perfect textbook. The time is too short and there are too many children to manage. To cover everything, it is probably better that the lesson should only have a narrow focus ....

T: It just came to my mind that the problem is not with the textbook, which you can always adapt .... but with the group. The ideal thing would be if there were many teachers and only one student! But ideal groups or textbooks are very difficult ..... books don't have to be ideal ....

A: I like the "Headway" books. My only objection is to the age suitability ...

T: Yes, it is a problem.....What we have just done (in class) doesn't mean anything to them. It just occurred to me ..... Jane Fonda ..... pre-intermediate ..... They looked at me ..... What's going on? ..... It didn't mean anything to them. So it was reading for reading's sake in fact.

A: Yes. Sometimes we can see it ..... (these texts) are intended for older students or (students) in other parts of the world. In America they would surely know what's going on ..... in Germany they know it too, but not here. It doesn't interest them, and they don't know anything about it.

J: It can happen to you that in some groups ..... I have 4 or 5 people who do know. In the other class just about nobody. So, surely, from the point of view of content it is very debatable what should be there. It must be the teacher who has to have flexibility to adjust, to adapt, to change. And it is, in my opinion, very precious knowledge because it always happens here that many teachers of English teach from a textbook ..... and that there are some aims. And now, probably the most difficult question ..... is teaching a foreign language more demanding and difficult nowadays than it was in the past?

T: We can only compare as students in the past and as teachers at present.

A: I can compare it to when I was a student before 1989. Now it seems to be better. Access to foreign languages is more common ..... people can gain access if they want ..... and teachers ..... these textbooks force teachers to teach in a more interesting way..... Whereas we did not have and did not see much possibility for studying. There is no comparison ..... from the point of view of the teacher it is much better.

V: So at that time we studied because we had to ..... but for what purpose? ..... we would never have a chance to go to the country whose language we were studying.

J: There was no motivation.

A: Surely it is more interesting because those old socialist textbooks were not appropriate ..... the themes were not suitable or adequate. There was no connection with reality, I think. They could have been connected (?) ..... So teachers are better off and students are more motivated .

T: We can see it from outside ..... how glad they are to study.You have been teaching for 7 years. Can you see any difference?

E: At the beginning I was very stubborn with new things. I taught for myself ..... I didn't consider the school. But now, of course, it is better if I compare it ..... it isn't possible to compare. I didn't like languages very much .... and now I teach them ..... so it seems that something must have changed.

T: Probably it will be more difficult ..... we can see it ..... teaching thinking about the financial point of view. Those books are year after year more expensive, so in two years it won't be possible for our students to buy them. For example, "Headway" costs 350 or 400 (crowns) now. and in two years it will cost 500, and it will be unbearable .... and it might be a problem and we will not be able to use them.

J: And what about the students? Is it more demanding today than in the past?

A: I think so.

T: Certainly more demanding.

J: Different levels of students come to our school who, for me, now in this fourth year, provide a difficult challenge. We have students who lack basic knowledge in one group with students who are fluent, and it is a catastrophe.

T: The problem is that there is a lack of English teachers or teachers of English language, and then every year they have a different teacher, often not qualified. We have some (students) who came from villages ..... so it means they had four years ..... then they put them into a better group with those advanced students ..... then they couldn't manage. It can be a reason as well.

E: And also that cut-off point of 25 students for dividing classes ..... If it were lower, you could make three groups and then you could fit them in at the right level.

J: It is the rule because ...

T: Well, it should be solved. There must be an amount (?) ....

J: If you create a homogeneous group or not ..... If they take into consideration not how many years but what exactly..... how many hours, how much students can manage, how have they managed, what a level is like ..... from this point of view it's more demanding I would say. How can you see changes in general, positive or negative, apart from those we mentioned? Or what do you think it would be possible to do to improve anything? Do you think it is possible to solve every problem with new textbooks, for example .... or with Slovak textbooks?

A: No. Certainly not.

T: They would think in Slovak using that kind of textbook.

A: I don't know. But why do something new if there is already something good? They should try to make it more accessible ..... I don't know ..... to make it less expensive, to subsidize the cost, to help students to buy books, foreign books. To make something that already exists seems unnecessary to me .... just for the sake of doing something new.

J: Or as supplementary material ....

T: As supplementary material, yes.

J: From the school's point of view, for example ..... topics concerning Slovakia ..... But again, it would have to be done in such a way as to not make students memorize them.

E: Even the Slovak National Uprising and translations could be there .... typical translations after each lesson...

J: Translations .....new words ...

T: And then they would start to think in Slovak.

E: They would (think) first in Slovak and not in English. It could happen that some of these students are not capable of translating into Slovak ..... not even from a grammatical point of view.

(Tape recording ends here because of excessive background noise)

APPENDIX L: TRANSCRIPT OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW , RAYMANA GYMNAZIUM PRESOV

D: Today is Wednesday the 25th of March, and I'm with a group of teachers in the Raymana Gymnazium in Presov. I'd like you just to say who you are ..... I know you know each other, but could you introduce yourself for my machine? T..... first?

T: My name is T ..... (long pause)

D: Something about yourself ... who you are ...

T: Ah. Something about myself. This is my 25th school year. I was always teaching English language. For some short period of time at the beginning of my career I was teaching only Slovak language and literature. But it was about 20 years ago. Since that time I have been always teaching English. Here at this school I have been 8 or 7 years .... since 1990 ..... 8 years at this school.

D: That's probably enough. G.....?

G: Well. I'm G..... I have been teaching for 28 years. The first six years I was teaching at a language school here in Presov ..... children and teenagers and adults ..... it was quite a good experience. But now I've been teaching here (for) 22 years. I have always taught only English ... nothing else.

D: OK. And M.....?

M: I'm M..... I've come from this type of school , because I attended this school when I was a secondary school student. And I've been teaching here since the beginning of my teaching career...for 28 years. One year as a university student in my final year ..... because I was a graduate level of teachers of English . These were ..... but many times

I'm quite fed up with all these things because it's too much about students and .... all this work dealing with

D: I want to ask you about that in a minute. That will be very interesting. And finally?

J: OK. My name is J..... I've been teaching at this school for 6 years, so I'm the youngest . And before teaching here I taught at so-called "Zakladna Skola" or elementary school here in Presov for 5 years. I taught ... I can say many subjects except for English ..... for example mostly Slovak language because I studied it , and also history ..... I was also a history teacher, but I hated history. So after that I taught English and Slovak language also at a special school ... it was a military aviation school ..... it was a secondary school here in Presov. And then in 1922 I started teaching English .....

M: 22?

J: 92. Sorry

D: I didn't like to correct (J: 1992. September). OK. I want to ask all of you now .... and you know that anyone can say anything ..... What are your feelings about teaching? Do you think it's a frustrating job? Do you find

M: Well, yes. I do always ..... enthusiastic. And I will always (be an) enthusiastic teacher as I have said before ..... because if not I couldn't have stayed here for such a long time. But after all these changes in our country even the work in the classes, you know, many times gets worse, because students sometimes forget to be well-educated, well-conducted and sometimes there is a problem with discipline. And that is what makes us question you know more often at the end of the week. Otherwise why I like the job of teaching, I must say .... it is a work with young bright people. There are always some good students in each of the classes. But what's bad (is) that we've got you know more and more work and we don't feel overpaid and that is what makes us sometimes you know very

disillusioned and sometimes I didn't have well .... the (?) to go to work and work with enthusiasm. But I forget it and next time I go ahead and it works again.

D: Does this sound familiar? Is it the same (for you)?

T: Well. I love teaching but I hate testing or questioning them..... Because as far as I just teach ..... I've taught them ..... We play games, I've told them stories and we discuss.... Everything's OK. We love each other ..... we are happy. Then there comes the day "D" and I have to find a text or just question them because our students have to have at least one mark for oral answers. And the problem comes. Now I say "I'm sorry" " 4" or " 5."

D: Is this the worst problem then?

T: Yes, the worst problem. And the problem starts. And I think it's maybe the problem of our marking scales. We've got just 5 marks. And 5 is failure. And I think it's horrible..... it's horrible to divide the whole class of completely different people into 5 groups.

D: Does anybody fail, by the way? Does anybody get 5?

T: (Yes) ..... And that makes me unhappy.

G: Very rarely. Very rarely. *(laughs)*

T: For example I started to write percentages for points. I write the mark because parents get them from teachers ..... and want to see the marks. But I like to write some points too and I say to them 47 points is 1, 58 points is still 1. ... and so on. It's very difficult .... it makes me unhappy. Some people say I'm strict and .... I don't know ....

D: So this is the most annoying thing about teaching.

T: Yes. This is the most annoying thing. Because while I just play and teach everything is OK.

D: Do you feel appreciated by parents, by your colleagues, by the school? What do you think about this?

G: Well the children are successful so we are appreciated. For example from the universities ... you saw the tests . So if their children are successful, we are appreciated several years later. *(everyone agrees).*

J: I don't think that giving marks is my ..... not favourite activity. It's something that disappointed .... it's disappointing for me. But I agree with M..... (?) behaving students and maybe some feedback and .... sometimes I don't feel that my energy .... or the things which I wanted to give the students ..... I don't see results. This is the most disappointing for me. Then I'm disappointed .... yes? .... when I see that I want to give them the best. I give them a lot of things ... it's my energy, my time and I don't see the results. (T interrupts: inaudible). Yes. So this is .... I think the thing which I don't like in this job.

D: So you agree with M.....

J: Yes. I agree with M..... yes ... that this is what I don't ;like in this job. Because we want to give them the best, and I think that it's really different .... it depends in which group you teach. We have different groups. I'm very happy to go to some classes, but really I am very nervous for some lessons. Because I don't like some groups .... or ... Always 2 or 3 people they can spoil all the lesson.

D: What do they do? What sort of things?

J: They disturb

T: They interrupt.

J: Yes, they interrupt. They say some noise (?). For example they want to be funny or the centre of attention ..... not give their English presentation , but their joke presentation. So this is I think a problem for me.

D: OK. Now we're talking about problems of teaching. This is an area which interests me a lot... also materials. are there any other problems which you have?

G: For example teaching a foreign language requires a lot of additional material. So we have to look for it for a long time..... change you know. Because there are other subjects (where) once you know something, so it's OK. You go to the class and .... but it's not enough for us to speak English and go to the class. We have to prepare additional material, a lot of it. What may be problematic is the source, time, effort and everything altogether.

D: Money?

G: Money as well. ... always about money.

T: And about starting a new coursebook. That's something horrible. I don't know if any other of our colleagues can imagine .... because when we started "Strategies", every morning we were running to school to be early here and to consult ...

M: We had to be very responsible. You know, some people say "Why can it be horrible?" It's not horrible, but we feel that it is a very very important work to do (?) for each word in the book. And before we go the class we always try to know all the and we even are ready to accept different kinds of work ... perhaps answers .....and to be ready for

different answers of the students .... and perhaps for all the possibilities. That is what we do before the class? Some people say "Well, I'll go to the class and I'll see how it works". But we don't think so. Most times perhaps we don't fell that .... the class will turn around (?) that. But, you know, we do it a lot. .... not to be .... how to say ... well, surprised with something unexpectable. And that is what we usually discuss. And as I can tell you, these days we start each unit of some new book. Because while it is for final course or for intermediate, you know .... Last year I prepared during my holidays the ...

J: Headway?

M: No. That was earlier. (Everyone interrupts). Well Yes. Two years ago ... "Headway Advanced". And I know now that next summer I will prepare "Hotline" or "Streetwise" or something like that. Ok. I'm ready for that. But ..... the feeling that I always have to do something which I'm not ready to do is what makes us sometimes well what..... tired or something. We do a lot, but still we have to come across the book beforehand two months or three weeks and discuss all the things.

G: Because we have to do all the books very well ... you know, the course. Because if you don't .... if you teach just for one or two months or a year, so we don't know if, for example, to practise something more, or it will be practised later , you know .... all the things in the book. So it takes quite a long time. And when we are at home we can say .... so that we have to change the coursebooks.

D: Well, let's go on to coursebooks, because we're talking about that. You seem to be saying to me that you have more problems in English than in other subjects concerning new coursebooks.

T: .... Because English for us is always a foreign language. It's not going in the blood and (?) and I can use my logic or something. But if I haven't come across some expression or word, my logic is for nothing. And every new coursebook .... it's really sometimes quite a

new language for us because English is changing so rapidly that we can't keep the pace. We can't keep up with it. We have no contact. There is no leaflet that will announce that "this is new" , or something. Where can we find it? How can I learn that? I think that this is a special problem of post-communist countries .... We can't go and pay for some stay there. It's incredible for us.

M: We can go but it's too expensive.

T: It's too expensive. I can go but my family .... I wouldn't suffer but you have to put up something .... give up something.

G: So this is where the teachers' books should be more detailed with more explanations, you know.

D: What kind of explanations?

G: For example when you came to my lesson there was in the listening Bovril, or something like that. You have to drink Bovril. But I don't know what it is. It's not in the teachers' book. So how can I know what Bovril is? What is it by the way?

D: It's a hot drink (everyone talks and laughs)

G: So some things in my opinion should be explained.

J: Or another example and you were a witness of it. I wrote down the question from the teachers' book. It was "whom did he ....?".

D: Yes. Whom did he ... something.

J: Yes. It was from the teacher's book . And then you told me that it's an old word .... in English they don't use "whom". And it is the teacher's book!

D: It's what we were saying ... that the language is changing.

T: Well, I have another example. I was reading some novel and there was "if I will ..." (everyone talks at once). And I am teaching that in there is the future you mustn't use "will" ... And then I read during the weekend ... (everyone interrupts and comments)

D: It's very difficult. I heard an expression the other day: "if she comes, I go". What kind of conditional is that? It's good English. Anyway, that's a separate question.

T: .....come and show us. For example, (when) we are writing and we correct very .... in detail. And then they come and show us. "I have read it from this book, and you have corrected this". What shall I say?

D: That's a very good question. I mean, you may well be right.

T: I can explain it, but they most often don't believe it.

G: So this is one point, the teachers' books. And then workbooks should have key words. But for example in "Studying Strategies" ..... generally in the Strategies (books) ..... there is nothing to continue with. And in "Streetwise" you have the key words (J: yes). You have?

J: So everything .... for teachers. That's why I like this book. Because there is for the students' book, for the workbook.

G: You are sure it's like that? And in Strategies it's up to me, if I know it or not.

D: When you say "key words" is it just the words in a list or is it with phonetic transcript?

G: No no.

J: Key answers. Teachers' answers. (everyone comments at once) Also, for example in "Streetwise" you have tests. What I like is you have tests for each issue. So .... even I don't do it in this way very much, so I adapt something, yes? But if they like it ..... and I think that students will pass in future. I think this is useful too. We have some example ... like a sample of something that you can use. So this is what I like too, that you have key answers and also some tests.

T: It takes a lot of time to prepare tests at home for myself. You think about points then think about the programme (?) and all these things ..... it's time-consuming.

D: But is there any problem using these tests which are (?) coursebooks. I mean do they fit with the other tests which you have ... the big tests?

T: We have got only tests that were issued in some booklets..... (inaudible) in the coursebook .... and I don't know ..... yes, "Streetwise".

J: "Streetwise", you have in the teachers' (book). We don't have something like official tests. We have only our own tests. So this is I think also not very good,. because I think we have different criteria ..... and we need also something that puts us together or unites us (everyone comments).

T: Although last year we did do the same in every class, for example.

D: Talking about assessment, we were talking about the problems of maturita and the entrance exams. Do you feel that there's a problem between the materials and between these big examinations at the moment?

T: I think there is. I think all the entrance exams are of a far higher level than our curriculum. ... (J: Yes) .....far higher. And then I don't understand it because I think every student has the right to pass the exam and has the feeling ..... I want the best students and I pass it ..... that they could do so in some special test or something. But the basic test should be done on such a level that is corresponding with what we teach (everyone comments and interrupts)

M: I would say that to put the higher level of school-leaving exams would be better. And then all those results should be accepted at the university. That would mean, you know, more effective work. But you know say big standard tests for all secondary schools ... because it works in many countries abroad, for example In Austria. (G: In Germany.) It's like that ....a very high standard of school exams and all these are according to the special capacity as is accepted at university. No need to pass any entrance exams. And if you go there, if you are able to adapt to their system .... you know during the first or the second ..... two first terms ..... and you will see if you can go on or not. What happens, for example, at this time in our country at entrance exams, you know, I don't like. They put the level too high .... and the first two years,you know, they also go down. And the students who get the great amount of knowledge, you know, or things. And then perhaps in the last 3 years they do a bit more. But the first 2, they do less than was the level of the entrance exam. Or there are a lot of exceptions given, you know ... a lot of things which are not very clear for students. ..... and it is very hard to say if they think they know that. Sometimes I don't like the questions or tasks which are put in their tests, because they are not clear enough for students. And you've got only one possible answer for multiple-choice or something like that.

T: And I wanted to say that our students are overloaded. Because we try to prepare them for these difficult tests to pass. Can you imagine some of them who are not preparing for such things ... they are really bored, or overloaded or they say "I don't need this. Why so

much? " They feel tired. And we just try to prepare them well for such a kind of entrance exam.

D: My question to all of you is, if you're preparing for these tests .... and they seem to contain a lot of grammar ... how do you match using a book like "Streetwise"and preparing for these tests. How do you do it?

M: Oh well. In our final year we've got extra classes for final students. Besides the 3 hour course during the week they've got the possibility to choose to have 4 more or 2 more classes where we do these extra things. It's vocational. If they want to enrol in these universities with English tests they should choose the 4 class course. (D: Special classes) Yes..... where we do all these things with either "Headway Advanced", First Certificate and some more. We can't do that during these traditional 3 hour classes a week..... because we do things for the whole class and extra things are in special groups. They are .... these groups are for example 20 people from 4 different classes plus people interested in grammar, vocabulary ....

G: In all of these classes you've got people who are there because they want to, but they don't work.

T: Because they have such a number of subjects. So some of them are in the language group just because they have to choose more subjects. But they don't want to take the school-leaving exam in maths (for example).

M: Maths or something (else)

G: I for example combine "Strategies" with our own books, used under socialism. And I teach grammar from there because it is explained and is compared with Slovak. And Slovak is so different, Slovak grammar. There are good exercises. I've even (?) groups where the students asked me to do it . So even in the traditional .... during the traditional

3 lessons' English, I do grammar once a week. Several of us .... (?) if they ask me to. And usually the .....

J: When do you do ....?

G: I do it in the 3rd grade and the 4th grade. If the students ask me. The lessons are boring, but the students appreciate it very much. They don't have to pay for private lessons to be prepared for school-leaving exams.

D: So some people are paying pay for private lessons because they're not being .....

G: They can only do so much there and we at this school we try to teach them as much as possible..... to be as well prepared as possible. But some of them still feel ..... because for example, you know the Pedagogical Faculty here..... 600 students apply, and 30 or how many are selected.

D: That's right.

J: Yes! This year more than 1000 (everyone talks at once).....

G: The competition os not only the competition of the students, but of the teachers because students blame us. I don't know why but they usually .... blame us. Our school is successful .... I may tell you ..... Every year our students are accepted there, but it's a big pressure on us and a lot of work really. You know when they are accepted at university, they say "Well, because I'm from a fine family. We are ..... (everyone comments at once). But if they are not, well they say "What did you do with us? I don't know.... "

M: That is what I don't like about the students.

D: This is the biggest problem of the teacher, I think.

G: Yes, but it happens many times.

D: I have a new question now .... and this is a very general question . Do you think teaching English is becoming more difficult and what kind of changes have taken place since 1989? Is it making your job easier, is it making it more difficult? How has it changed your life?

M: I wouldn't say easier. I wouldn't say though more difficult. I would say the right level (?) and more complicated, I would say. Because on the one hand side we've got a very rich variety of books we can choose from. Secondly, while people say students want to travel ... they perhaps are interested in language. They are, but they think that everything they take from .... well just listening, and they think that if they look at (?) thinking that they can get everything, you know. They don't want to prepare well .... they are lazy to do this systematic ... their own work at home. It's a different attitude to duties and assignments. And looking perhaps at parents. Parents are a bit different. They are more and more in business. They're very very busy. And they think that if they earn much money, they think that teachers who don't are .... well, not people who are respectful .... or perhaps they don't respect us very much, because they say : "Well, you don't know much of the world. Because you don't have a business or something like that. We are something like out of the society ...

D: Are you saying that the status of teachers is going down?

M: Yes. It's going down. Business people go up in everything. You know, their post in the society, their salaries with everything they can get. They are travelling and have big cars. Teacher can't.

D: That's one change. What other changes have taken place? You've seen so many changes, I'm sure, in your job.

T: I think we have to work much more than before. Because we have one textbook .... you saw it. It was my second textbook I was teaching from. Then we decided to teach from "Strategies" . They were 4 hard years going through a new textbook. And now after 8 years, we've got maybe 4 years..... not leisure years, but a little bit easier. and now we are starting another new coursebook.

D: Which book is that?

T: Maybe "Hotline" and "Streetwise" and maybe .... (Others comment and agree)

D: And it will be next year?

T: Yes. Next year. (everyone comments)

M: I cannot say that we have 4 easy years, because each year .... I took each year one or two more books ..... you know, one for conversation ..... advanced conversation groups. Other books for ..... I can say that since 1989 or 1989 I learned myself you know, each year one coursebook .... for over 8 years. I teach this one book a year, a new one.

T: And we study much more than our students. And nobody knows it..... just me.

M: Yes. I was speaking about that, you know, with our director and with our colleagues. They don't agree (?) They wouldn't even understand .

G: It's a little bit different about me. Because when I started teaching I taught at the language school and we could choose whatever book we wanted. So I taught Eckersley "Essential English", Hornby, the (?) books, Alexander. I had to use ..... my headmistress forced me to use the direct method.... everything, I had to try everything. And then we

really used the old books. And the books which were used before the revolution. So we were an experimental gymnazium. We experimented on them. So we influenced them a lot .... I hope for the better. And you know nothing is black and white. I keep saying nothing is black and white. So there were some advantages because for example we knew what we could expect from the students. We knew the books and what they should have known. Now we don't know, and at the university they don't know, because a lot of

....

M: This is part of the problem.

G: And what is very difficult nowadays is that a lot of students study abroad. They study in the USA mostly. They come here and they go on after one year's interruption . And then when they stay for one year in the USA ... I didn't .... never. And they sit in the class and your job becomes much more difficult because they can hear your mistakes etc. etc. And the situation about the students .... they can criticize you ... you know. So we are in a very disadvantaged position. But I must say that generally ...

(interruption in the tape during which there is a discussion about the use of ns teachers in Slovak classrooms after I ask G..... if she feels that she is being compared with a ns teacher)

D: I just want to ask you J..... What do you think Slovak teachers can offer students that native speakers can't? Because I must admit, I agree with this.

J: Maybe. ..... I think it's difficult to say what we can offer. Maybe we understand their mistakes. I think I can expect what is difficult for my students, so I practise it. Or I know

G: We used to be in the same position.

J: Yes. I know , for example, which words are new vocabulary for them. So I stop. I ask : "Do you understand it? Can you explain it?" Because sometimes you have for example

phrasal verbs .... if they see 'get on ', they understand 'get', but they don't understand 'get on'. And then they don't understand: "I get on well with my father". It's a different sentence. So it is important that we can expect their mistakes or their weak places. *(D: That's right)* Maybe, I don't think that fluency is the problem. Because they listen to .... they watch programmes. They are good at listening. And also they listen to many songs. And they learn also lyrics of the songs. So I think that they don't feel anything ..... it;'s not listening that's the problem. But I think that feel also, for example ..... Today we spoke about translation and using Slovak in the lesson . I think that this is also what we can offer them ..... to shift, or to use and explain it again. If you have a weaker student ..... because we have them .... so they know that they can rely on helping them. It's not good but it is possible to say it in English, er in Slovak ..... it's something I think, I don't know why.

D: That's very interesting. I want to ask you all now .... with all of these changes ..... how do you cope with these changes? Do you cope on your own or do other people give you support? Does the school support you ..... teaching training courses ..... your colleagues?

M: A bit of each I would say. Yes, I would say a bit of each. There is some support, you know, because we are here and we speak about problems. Sometimes my colleagues told me one, and the other it's me, who gives her support. Secondly, it happens that there is some language competition and one of our students is either the winner or the second best. It is again a very moral support, because we say .... well..... perhaps we did it well. Also we see that the students come and ask "Will you have these extra classes? Or will you bother doing this?" Sometimes they give me some ideas because I ask them "What would you like to have?". And if they are ready to tell me, this would be better for me at this time. It means that they think of the content .... that they perhaps want to do better. I agree from time to time and ask: "Well, I've got 2 or 3 programmes for you next week. Which of these suits you best? " And they tell me: "This one". And I ask why .... and they say .... They can explain. And I see in these sentences that they personally want to master

language, they want to communicate, and they feel that English is one of the means of .....either communication, or perhaps what they need in their future job. Either they will be doctors or perhaps business people, or something like that. Even sometimes our families, for example my husband always says: "Will you come and follow the film with me?" I say: "Sorry, I'm reading." " I know you are preparing, you are not reading". He knows that I prepare, that I don't sleep .... when sometimes he does nothing. They know that we come home with tests, or even we read books for the class. Even our (?) .... what else?..... because if they don't work we wouldn't be here.

D: This is important support, but .....

M: You mean financial support?

D: No. I don't mean financial. Think about teacher training programmes ..... seminars .... things like the authors of the books . I mean the teacher's book is a kind of support to help you.

M: I always read all teacher's books because they are help no.1 for me. Any course I take it's the first thing I do. I never go to the class before ... you know, without reading. When I choose it, it's my job .... but I always come across .... because I would like to know what the people who made the book think about a problem. And many times I do 90% of the ideas, the suggestions. But many times as a work (?) it doesn't work for my group ... perhaps for the other class. But I always read all these teacher's books. And perhaps you want me to speak about courses. I have to say that we here ... we've done so many courses (everybody comments). But I don't say it with really .... with some complaint. I'm a very lucky person that I could attend all these courses. A lot on our country .... perhaps in our country with some foreign lecturers..... but even some abroad. I've been abroad for teaching courses, a two-week time in Hastings, very close to your home.

D: Very near to Eastbourne.

M: Yes. And in Switzerland for 5 days. You know as a school(girl) .... university student too. But as a teacher only to two countries, for two courses abroad. And we had John Wheeler and other personalities from Bratislava.... they are very close, mostly very close. I would sometimes befriend British lecturers ..... because your work is a bit different. But if British people are busy with other countries, we are happy with Americans (everyone laughs).

D: Do you want to record this?

G: Why not?

M: She's right. We were trained in British English. I prefer British English. (G: And British accents). They are more punctuated.

D: Punctuated?

G: No. Punctual.

D: Punctual? Precise?

M: Yes! Precise. That's right.

D: I suppose what I'm really asking about this .... I wanted to ask everybody, if you're saying how difficult it is to adopt a new coursebook .... and I think when you're adopting a new coursebook any teacher (me included) ... we need some help ..... And I'm just wondering if the teacher's book gives you enough help. Or if it's possible to get help from other sources, which you're not getting. What help would you like to receive when you adopt a new coursebook or when there's a big change in the way you teach?

J: I already took some teacher training courses .... and then you have a good teacher's book .... I think you can manage things. But I can say that maybe I am the youngest of

these English teachers. But maybe it's to my advantage because some special subject for methodology at the university ..... maybe my colleagues think that it was something updated. But I can say that I didn't learn anything at university concerning teaching. We had teacher training in Slovak, and I think that nobody at this time .... I finished school in 1986 ..... I think that they didn't expect that we will use such courses. So they didn't prepare us. So I think first I started teacher training and then I had to share my ideas and check them in teacher's books. So most ..... both in my case. But not at university. I can say I wasn't prepared at university. You know it was in the 80s so ...

D: I've asked most of the questions I wanted to ask and it's been really interesting. I just wondered if there's some final thing you want to say..... something that you haven't had an opportunity to say..... on the changes in English teaching, on using coursebooks, on the support you get, on your feelings about your job.

M: Just one or two sentences. I can say that even when we used our Slovak textbooks before, I didn't treat the books as some legend or something we cannot use it in different ways ... without imagination or something like that. I always tried to bring to the class.. And many times some actualization, or something like that ..... we always do that. But it was very hard because we didn't have such good teacher's books as we have now. But even before you know we did a bit of each. But now we've got .... there are a great variety of these textbooks. Now we have got a lot of ideas to choose, and that is what is easy on the one hand. and on the other one is even a good book doesn't mean a good teacher in the classroom. This is what I say .... all these ideas, what to use .... to try to perhaps distinguish in different groups .... that is the most important .... to be dynamic, to be sensitive enough to choose, if for example the day after the holidays we cannot work as in the middle of the week .... psychological moments (?). And that is what is in the hands of a teacher..... either beginner or skilled. But it depends if you want to be a good teacher or just go to work.

D: Thank you very much. G.....?

G: For me for example I would need more exercises practising grammar in the textbooks. So it's my ideal but I know it's absolutely idealistic ..... to form a series of books based on Slavic languages. No. Not based on Slavic languages ..... but first for students who have a Slavic language as the native language. Then you would see what kind of grammar we need. Because for example in Strategies you've got 5 units with reported speech ..... a lot of units with conditional clauses ..... no unit where infinitive with accusative is practised or .... for example, different structures. Or just ... you don't know that "can" is to be able to and "may" to be allowed. It's up to us to decide when and how to do it. So we would need more support I think from the textbooks. For example when our students go to the US and they come back they say that they have been best .... or better than the American students in everything besides writing essays and physical training. So what I would need in the book is to get more skeletons for how to write an essay. This is what I (?) as well ... to stress some writing.

J: OK. I want to say something more positive about us. That I had the possibility with M ... I went to a course to Scotland and because it was a teacher training course I had the possibility to observe English teachers. And I was really proud of these colleagues. because everything I saw there it was part of our everyday life. Maybe some parts we teach better, I can say. There were students who learnt English as a second language, yes? And maybe this is the thing I told you .... that we know the mistakes, we can expect them. So I know how to cope with this. And what I saw there .... I can't say that it wasn't new for me or it wasn't important for me ....But I would say that it was like a trip for me, not like a course because I just checked that we use very many activities which are used mainly in England or in Spain, or in Italy. So I was really proud. And I want to say that it's only our hard work .... that we studied it and we prepared it and we are able to manage to do things on this level. So I'm really proud.

D: Excellent! Very good. And T.....?

T: So I'm sorry to say that I've never had the possibility to attend a foreign language course or (?) abroad. I took part in about 8 inland courses and I think I have learnt really quite a lot there, much much more than at university I must say. What I would like to say to finish is that we always use a lot of authentic materials. I asked my friends to bring something and so on. We use "Friendship" magazine. Even before the revolution we were not using just the textbook ..... and some of those stupid texts we just left out. And now I've got a wonderful textbook and it will help much better, I hope .....and we still know how to use many materials. I will never stop..... What I would like to have in a textbook is what G..... said .... much more grammar exercises, and all these structures that our students can't learn because our language is completely different. Or you can have the list from our old textbooks. They are old but all the structures are there ..... are the basics, I think, our students need to make up some other (?) after finishing the school. And there may be some formal organization of the textbook. I saw "Hotline" and "Streetwise" ..... What I don't like is vocabulary written at the back of the textbook. I think it's not good psychologically. It should be in the units..... maybe after the text, in the text in part ..... or at the end of the unit. Then there is a lack of phrases and idioms. These new students know less phrases and idioms than the older ones, because after each unit we had (?) attention. You had to learn each by heart. There is no other way to learn them ..... at least I haven't found it in any of these new coursebooks. And then they pass some entrance tests and there are a lot of these ..... they just don't understand the text. And some of them are very good. And then another thing, when there is vocabulary, it is without any transcription. Our students .... I think every country's students ..... learn the international transcription. Why isn't there the transcription? It is really time-consuming ... our students are really overloaded and there is no time in the lesson to write the (?). If I say "Do this at home", they (?). I think this should be in every textbook. Because we've got much more than these texts where we teach students to use a dictionary. I think it's not the homework..... a good homework for the students to list in a dictionary for an hour or 30 minutes .... they get tired. So this is what I really miss. Your textbooks are really very nice but this doesn't make our work or the work of students easier.

APPENDIX M: SCHOOL VISIT JOURNAL (Dolny Kubin)

Wednesday November 19th

7.15: I come into the staff room with J. His office and classroom is in the main building of the gymnazium but the other teachers of English (and German) teach in the annex, which is a 5-minute walk away.

7.20: We go to the annex to meet the other teachers. I meet T. (who I saw briefly on my first visit to the school on Monday), V., A. and also E. (on maternity leave, but persuaded to come back by J. for the focus group). T. surprises me by asking me into her first class.

7.30: When I go into T.'s class (see Obs.1) her reasons become apparent. For the first part of the lesson I am interviewed by the students who are practising question forms: this activity goes well enough and lasts for about 15 minutes. I watch T. for the rest of the lesson, but at the end we don't have much time for a post-lesson chat.

Observation Notes Lesson 1 19.11.97 7.30-8.15 Teacher: T.

Class Profile:	Class 3C, 16 yrs., 9 girls/4 boys, Elementary
Lesson aims:	Practice of question forms
Materials:	Headway Elementary U13 p.93
Pre-lesson: comments	Likes the materials in the book and doesn't anticipate any particular problems with the group

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Activities:

1. Students interview me to practise question forms.
2. Headway Elementary p.93. Making questions from the exercises silently.
3. Checking the exercise: "Read the question and the answer too"
4. Using questions from the exercise in pairwork with "real" answers.
(Maybe it would have been helpful to get students thinking a bit more about the questions to make the task less mechanical).

5. Asking questions which they remember across the class

Post-lesson: We both agreed that this was a very straightforward lesson with a willing group which didn't require much preparation - it was just a question of going through the materials which were simple and self-explanatory. No real problems of adaptation.

No doubt I would have made more notes, but couldn't as I was directly involved in the first half of the lesson. Anyway it was a useful introduction to gymnazium classes and showed me what a competent and organized teacher T. is. It also presented the imported coursebook materials in a favourable light.

8.25: Focus group interview with J. moderating (I am his assistant). Present are: T., E., V., A. D., the other English teacher is absent sick. P., the trainee, doesn't come on Wednesday - so only 4 people. I haven't had adequate time to really prepare J. to be moderator, but he has seen and knows the questions well. He seems enthusiastic about the task. The interview is slow to warm up, with everyone going round the table speaking rather formally in turn. I intervene (recorded on tape) perhaps needlessly to encourage people to think of the interview as a conversation. But it seems to work as people relax more and there is genuine interaction. The whole interview takes about 45 minutes: only V. (very shy) doesn't really relax and participate. *(J.'s comment afterwards: " I was surprised at how much people talked. Some of the things which they said surprised me").*

9.10: At the end of the focus group we try to make up a schedule for me to either observe or teach classes. Unfortunately, these teachers are under so much pressure that the possibility of team-teaching seems like a luxury. The classes I will be teaching (with one or two exceptions) will mainly be substituting for absent teachers. The schedule is as follows for the next two days:

Thu. 20/11	8.25-9.10 Prima (observe A.)
	9.20-10.05 4A (teach T.'s class)
	10.20-11.05 3B (observe A.)
	12:10- 12.55 3C (teach T.'s class)
Fri. 21/11	11.15 - 12.00 3D (observe R., American Peace Corps volunteer)
	12.10 - 12.55 4C (observe T.)
	13.05 - 13.50 3C (team-teach with A.)

9.20: I stay in the staffroom chatting to T., A. and a few German teachers. T. explains to me which materials I will need to prepare lessons for the next day. The room is dark with no natural light and overheated - it compares unfavourably with J.'s room in the main building. A new Canadian teacher turns up with his Slovak wife and meets people. He will replace V. who is going to leave teaching (for the time being) in a few week's time. I also meet R., the Peace Corps volunteer from Colorado.

10.20: I go out for early lunch and coffee with R. I have already been told (by J.) that she is relatively new and dissatisfied with quite a lot of things to do with the school: for instance, she refuses to reach more than a certain number of hours per week.

10.30: In the restaurant R. argues that the English teachers are not appreciated by the authorities, nor by J. who is Head of Department. She thinks that the school resembles the government, being organized into a strict hierarchy with those at the top not considering those below. Example: no one has thought to divide the students properly according to level. Another example: students wandering around, not really knowing where to go in the school. She finds this disgraceful. She also says she is prepared to complain even about little things like lights that don't work or lack of toilet paper. But her Slovak colleagues don't and this annoys her, since she respects their enthusiasm and ability, but thinks they will become disillusioned and leave teaching.

12.00: Back in the staffroom with T., A. and R., I invite teachers to come out for drinks after lessons on Friday at 2pm. But T. says that the deputy head wants to speak to them about class reorganization and who will take V.'s classes. Apparently, the Canadian teacher and the deputy head both feel that he cannot teach the young 11 year olds that V. is teaching. So either T. or A. will have to teach them. A. explodes because she has been trained as a secondary, not a primary school teacher: "That's not what I came to this school to do either".

12.10: After R. and T. have gone I talk informally to A. In spite of her annoyance a few moments ago she is enthusiastic about teaching, although very tired with a work load of 28 hours plus preparation. She does find the young children a problem, especially with discipline.

1.00: I leave the school.

Thursday, November 20th

8.15: Talking to A. before her lesson she mentioned her teaching load again (28 hours rather than the stipulated 21). Also that no one had seen her teach before. Most interesting was that she and her colleagues often had to substitute lessons since they were the lowest paid and the computer picked out the cheapest option for the school when a substitution was required. Then she said: "Let's drop the subject".

Observation Notes Lesson 2 *20.11.97* *8.25-9.10* *Teacher: A.*

Class Profile:	Prima, 11 yrs., 6 girls/9 boys, Beginners
Lesson aims:	Practice of vocabulary for rooms in the house.
Materials:	Project English 1 (wbook & st.book)
Pre-lesson comments	A plans to check homework before starting the main part of the lesson Wants to introduce the topic via a listening task (suggested in the book). Finds the materials problematic since everything has to be explained in Slovak. Needs more materials to supplement, especially pictures, but no time free. Sometimes test material needed as well. Doesn't enjoy teaching this level and feels she has been stuck with it because she is low down in the school hierarchy.

Activities:	1. Children asked me lots of questions with the teacher prompting in Slovak. I asked them a few. 2. Workbook exercise: describing houses. No Slovak in the book means that Andrea is constantly having to explain and translate. But this is done quickly. 3. Textbook p.19. Necessary to organize groups (in Slovak).Children listen to recorded sounds on tape and have to work together to find out which rooms in a house they refer to. Although this is a fun activity, a lot of Slovak explanation is needed to make them

understand the task. Even then children need to ask questions about what to do. Children tend to give one-word answers. (They could perhaps repeat the answers for some pronunciation practice). The second time round A. plays the sounds to elicit longer responses such as "She's in the bedroom". Children confuse "bedroom" and "bathroom". (A good idea to focus on pronunciation here - does the book do this?)

4. Textbook p.19: looking at advertisements for accommodation. A. asks children what they know about such advertisements in Slovak. Children read the advertisements and try to understand abbreviations such as "kn" for "kitchen". (Is this a useful exercise for them? I think not!) They write out abbreviations in full, which is useful in that they get to spell all the names of the rooms in full. A. then checks the answers round the class asking individuals to write on the board. Children had difficulty writing the abbreviations correctly, as I would. (I think there's no point in this: which spellings will they remember, I wonder?) Children then discuss correct/incorrect spellings and help each other to spell.

5. Still with the advertisements, children have to say what each house has got eg. 2 bedrooms, bathroom. (It would be nice to have some supplementary games to use here, perhaps involving pictures of the rooms.)

6. Homework : workbook sentences to answer eg "Do you live in a house or a flat?"

7. A long discussion in Slovak which I didn't understand, involving just about everyone. It turned out that they are preparing house plans which they can talk about in class, and that the discussion was because children were complaining that they didn't know how to do the plan of a house! They also asked for new words such as "hall". But some children were leaving blanks on their plans because they corresponded to words which they did not know. This task comes from the book. (A nice personalized task I thought and probably worth all the hassle!)

Post-lesson: We talked about some of the frustrations of using these materials for the first time. A. felt very tied to the book while it was unfamiliar, making comments such as "Pronunciation was done last lesson" or "Practice was last lesson" when I raised the question of further opportunities for practice, especially in the pronunciation of difficult words.

A. manages this age group very well and when teaching completely hides the fact that she feels she should be teaching older students. But she fears that the school is about to give her more of these classes as soon as V. leaves. I can really sympathize with her and suspect that her prediction will be right.

9.20: I taught an intermediate level group for T., expecting the class to be as motivated as the one I had seen. But the presence of two boys (Miro and Peter) with better English than the others soured the atmosphere. They both challenged me as soon as I came in, wanting to know if we were going to waste time using the textbook. I asked what was wrong with the textbook: "A thousand things". When I pressed further there was no

answer. These boys continued to pretend that they were above what was going on: the others wanted to learn but were clearly intimidated by them. The class consisted of 4 girls and 4 boys, plus the 2 malcontents. The atmosphere was one of cynicism, but gradually most of the group began to work and even became enthusiastic.

Observation Notes Lesson 3 *20.11.97* *10.20-11.05* *Teacher: A.*

Class Profile: 3B, 16 yrs., 10 girls/2 boys, Pre-Intermediate/Lower Intermediate

Lesson aims: Practice of present perfect tense.

Materials: Headway Pre-Intermediate p.103

Pre-lesson: A. plans to elicit the grammar structure by means of pictures and a game.
The game is adapted from one suggested in the Teachers' Book.
A. has decided to add her own suggestions to experiment a little.

Activities: 1. Game: What has changed in the classroom? (A very large room, by the way).
Four people go out while the others plan some changes in the room. When the four come in they are supposed to say what has changed. However, it is easy to do this avoiding the target structure, eg "windows are open" rather than the more complex "someone has opened the window" They only managed the 'correct' structure after being prompted. (It's the teacher book suggestions that make this game not work very well. Would it be better for those coming in to ask questions such as "Has someone ... . ?")

2. Using pictures in the coursebook sts. say what has just happened eg "The cars have had an accident". Only a bit of translation was necessary to help them here.
(This activity and the game were raced through very quickly. I wonder if all the students have understood. Do they have any problems?)

3. Making wedding plans: what have they done/haven't they done.
A useful controlled practice exercise.

4. Grammar exercise. They should try to match the two halves of sentences.
They are supposed to match the ones which are grammatically correct, but Andrea had the bright idea of asking them to make the silliest combinations as well. (A nice creative touch, bringing some fun to a rather dull task!)

5. Grammar exercise. Sentence completion and checking.
The exercise checking followed the pattern of the previous ones: individual sts. provide the answer and the teacher moves on. (Do the others understand?)

6. Grammatical explanation: one student asked to read it out from the book.
The explanation is in English. There are examples then to translate into Slovak.
(Is the translation exercise in the book?)

7. Homework: translation of sentences.

8. Final activity to fill in a few minutes. Students have to walk round the class and find the strangest thing that has happened to anyone. All the students looked totally blank and when asked to do the task didn't really know what was expected.
By the time the teacher had explained what to do, the class time was up.
(I was completely taken aback by this activity introducing slightly different grammar, "Have you ever ....?". An interesting idea for an activity, but too complex I think for the last two or three minutes of a lesson.)

Post-lesson: Annoyingly, we didn't have much time for discussing the lesson except for the final activity. I asked Andrea when she had had the idea for the 'round-the-class' task. She admitted having invented it on the spur of the moment, but was still disappointed that the students hadn't really understood. She would welcome more suggestions for genuine 'filler' activities to extend the coursebook work when only a few minutes of class are left and everyone is tired.

10.50: From watching A.'s two classes today it begins to be apparent how dependent teachers now are on textbooks for everything, following the structure faithfully and doing every exercise. Does this mean they are less creative? Every time I ask A.: "Was this your idea?", she says it came from the book.

12.10: I taught another class for T. (3C) with 14 students. I had previously observed them and had no problems at all. The material in the book (Headway Elementary, Unit 13) seemed fine, but I decided to do a bit of stress and pronunciation work for questions, something which wasn't covered. *(T. subsequently confirmed the lack of pronunciation material: see her interview)*

1.00: Went for lunch with R. and then went home.

Friday, November 21st

7.45: Got into work early and talked to T. about the classes I had taught for her. The conversation turned to textbooks and I ended up recording it.

Interview with T. concerning the use of imported coursebooks (complete transcript)
(The interview took place the day after I had been acting as a substitute teacher for T., teaching her lessons at various levels. The books discussed relate to those lessons)

Dt: Today is Friday, and I'm talking to T about the coursebooks ...
T: So timing is difficult, because I never know how much to take ..... Then the grammar sections are very long, so they get bored with it ..

Dt: Which book are we talking about?
T: About New Headway Intermediate.

Dt: Right. That's the book I was just teaching in class yesterday. Is this the first time you've taught this book?
T: Yes. It's the first time. So I don't know it. I don't know what it will look like in the lessons. I don't know if they will be interesting or not. So it would be better if I taught them next year again, because I will know this book ....

Dt: Do you think that will happen?
T: I won't teach them, but our other classes are going to use these books. It will be easier for the teacher. But you know I ..... there's some kind of coursebooks that have the list of vocabulary. Look at this (shows an example from an older coursebook) for each unit. I didn't teach them last year ....they had an English lecturer and then they had ..... well, they had two teachers the whole year and they didn't do this. And they didn't learn the vocabulary, and now they miss it .. they don't have enough words. So they feel really depressed about this.

Dt: I'm just looking at this thing. (the vocabulary list from the coursebook)
T: I mean I've asked them to learn it and I give them some checklists for vocabulary.

Dt: So will they be tested on this at the end of the year ?
T: They are tested regularly after units but ..... it's a difficult book. Because they had Grapevine 2 before this one and that's completely different.

Dt: Would you rather teach with this one or with Grapevine?
T: No, this one. I don't like Grapevines. It's more challenging, this one. All the things you need to think about ..... how to start the lessons, how to make it a challenge for them, how to make them interested in the text that's going to be read or about the listening .....

Dt: What's your background in teaching? How many years have you been teaching?
T: Background? This is my third year.

Dt: Right. I see. Always in this school?
T: Uh huh.

Dt: And have you always taught with this type of book?
T: With Headways and Grapevines, that's all. These two types ... they are completely different types. But only these two.

Dt: And every year is it a new book you've got to get used to?
T: In those two or three years it's every year a new book (laughs). Because I didn't know them before. So .....

Dt: Who chooses the book? Why are some classes using New Headway? Why are some using ...
T: Some of them only reached the (inaudible) ..... because we heard about New Headway's coming from the publisher and that class decided to use the New Headway. We just told the classes in the 2nd or 3rd year ..... no, at the end of the 2nd year, you can choose either the old Headway or the new one.

Dt: So students get to choose?
T: Uh huh. And some students had the old Headway so they chose those ones, and some of them decided for this ...

Dt: Is there a syllabus apart from the book? Or is the book the syllabus?
T: No. The syllabus for each class is based on the book.

Dt: So when you change the book, you change the syllabus?
T: Uh huh. It's more or less the same for one level. You just sometimes change the topics or .... .there are maybe more activities to do with this book than the old Headway. It's better for information this one and ... there are lots of things to do. They have their workbooks too. They are reading some exercises ...

Dt: There's masses of material ...
T: Masses of material. You don't know which you can skip and which you can't .... it's difficult to make a decision.

Dt: So do you do everything, or do you skip things?
T: No, not everything. First I did everything in this book .... the first lessons, first units. But then I could see that some of the activities were useless .... they didn't work or didn't have any effect.
So if I'm thinking more about every unit....what I could miss out and what I should do in what way ..... and as for workbooks I just ask them to do them on their own and then return about problems or more difficult exercises.

Dt: Would you rather have a book with all the material or a much simpler book which you could adapt and make materials for?
T: I think to have a simpler book ... I don't know. It's better to have more and make decisions and to have just ..... (inaudible because of laughter)

Dt: I think this is a good book. What about the other one, the Headway Elementary ? Have we got that?
T: Uh huh.

Dt: Because I was teaching that one as well yesterday.
T: So, this is for elementary level. And it's a really good book because at that level students don't feel they know everything and they don't need to do this and you know ..... (Dt: That's right) .... they are grateful to do anything. The activities are very mixed, very different.

Dt: So do you choose things to do, or do you do everything?
T: I usually do everything but in a different order. I don't go from the beginning to the end of the unit, exercise by exercise. Sometimes I skip something if I think they know it but .... It's a very good book and interesting for them.

Dt: Do you ever ..... I mean yesterday I made a game for them because I had some time .... Do you ever do that, or is there just no time at all?
T: Uh huh. Yeah. Because if I have the class four times a week I have time for this sort of things. If it's just three times a week, it's almost no time. I give 5-minute activities at the beginning or at the end just to fill the time, but ..... Did you do anything from the book?

Dt: We did Unit 13.
T: 13. Uh huh. So did you do that ...(inaudible) ?

Dt: What I did the first part of the lesson ..... I just said I'm going to do all question practice this lesson ..... so I just gave them some information about me and they had to make the question. And then I gave them this game, which I'll leave. And ..... how did I do it? I wasn't quite sure how to do it actually once I'd made it, which is typical of me. I actually gave out the answers. I divided them into three groups and there was one group of boys and two groups of girls. And I gave out these answers like "Slovan Bratislava", "swimming and reading", "40 minutes". And then they had to .... the next thing is that I read out the questions on the cards. .... and they had to choose the questions which would go with those answers. But it was only the first part of the questions like "How long ...?", "When does he ..?", "How often does .. .?". And then they had to do

the same for the middle of the questions. And the idea was to get 4 questions .... each group had to get 4 questions and answers that fitted together.

T: Were they supposed to tell you straight away which question ... which answer does it go to?

Dt: They had to shout for it... they had to say "This is ours. We want this one!" So I gave it to them and sometimes they were wrong. And then they wanted to swap it. And other groups sometimes would let them swap. I think in the end they got there ..... it was just manipulating questions.... and they thought it was quite fun. Then I thought I might practice some intonation, because sometimes questions come very quickly ..... you just hear one or two words. So "Where did you go?", that kind of thing. And they enjoyed that. And then I gave them "Laurel and Hardy" (a text from the coursebook), but they'd only just finished that at the end, so I thought maybe you would want to check things on it.
T: So, they've got this bit of paper here .....

Dt: But they will bring them.
T: Yeah. Intonation. There are no exercises for intonation in the books.

Dt: That's what I thought. All the classes I've seen have problems of pronunciation. And I wondered what you do for pronunciation.
T: Well ... pronunciation .....to practice pronunciation of separate words is quite easy. But to practice the stress and intonation they ..... There's some supplementary materials but they don't come with the coursebooks. You need to pay for them I think extra and that's expensive ...

Dt: So that's something which is really lacking in the coursebook. For example, Miro, who thought his English is so good .... he couldn't pronounce this word "reliable". He understood it ..
T: His pronunciation is quite bad, I think.

Dt: ..... but he needs some help. But he believes that he knows everything in this book.
T: He doesn't want to accept the help ... it's the first thing. And then you know I really don't know .... I've taught for a short time ..... I don't know how to practice intonation. Sometimes I have the problem. I have a Slovak accent, so I don't feel so confident to teach them pronunciation that ..... or you can call it stress..

Dt: I think if it's a coursebook you shouldn't have to buy a separate book to do pronunciation.
T: I think so too.

Dt: That's a nuisance. Do some of the other coursebooks deal with pronunciation?
T: Er, no. Not really. They just say ... they just suggest: repeat the questions after the person speaking, but that's not really intonation practice. And some of the activities are hard because some of these textbooks ... they suggest that students are in Britain, in an English-speaking country and they suppose that students know more vocabulary, more things than they really do in Slovakia. And they're..... I can remember now one silly piece to practise stress and intonation ... and they were supposed to correct the wrong information in the text they were listening to ... they were listening to the text, and they were supposed to make a really long sentence that ... to think about intonation and stress, and they couldn't do it at all. I was happy they could say something ... they could correct I couldn't do this sometimes ...

(At this point, a few minutes before the end of our conversation, the recording equipment began to malfunction. The rest of what was said was inaudible due to electrical interference)

9.20: I went to see T.'s lesson in which she asked the students to reflect on why they were doing so badly after 8 years of learning English.

Observation Notes Lesson 4 *21.11.97* *9.20- 10.05* *Teacher: T.*

Class Profile: 4C, 17 yrs, 5 boys 9 girls (?), Intermediate

Lesson aims: Reflecting on their progress in English.

Materials: "Recipes for Tired Teachers" game pp.10-11

Pre-lesson: T. said before the lesson that she felt she had reached a point with this group where she needed to make them start thinking seriously about their lack of progress in English after 8 years of study. The lesson is very much an experiment, which may or may not work.

Activities: 1. Sts asked me questions about life in Britain for a few minutes.
(This has really become a ritualized activity!)

2. Game about language learning leading to serious discussion.
They have to assume the role of a person learning a language and say what that person thinks eg "I believe most teachers talk too much and dominate the lesson"
One person has to act as a teacher and control the discussion. A very bright boy, Vlado, volunteered, and asked general questions such as "What do you think about English classes?".

(In this discussion they are asked to assume the opinions of different characters who aren't themselves: would it be better to let them have their own opinions, perhaps responding to a menu of statements? However, in spite of this, some good observations, eg on whether we can survive without grammar, were made. As the activity goes on it begins to make more sense, but I still wonder if important points will be lost).

3. T. asks them to forget about the opinions expressed on the pieces of paper and asks what their real opinions are concerning foreign language learning. She asks: "Do you agree with the opinions already expressed in the class?" (A problem of remembering here).

4. Analysis of the discussion activity. T. thinks that the book is not helping them because this is clear from test results. Some ideas/solutions from students (Should they be in Slovak?) are:- More language lessons, visiting the countries where the language is spoken, using the language as much as possible, more practice, using the coursebook rather than not using it T. adds the need for them to be active learners. (For post-lesson discussion see T. interview)

11.15: I went to see R.'s lesson, an element of which was once again feedback. After the lesson she asked me for my own feedback on what she was doing. I found it very difficult to answer this after only seeing her with her students for a short time. But I believe that she would get more effective feedback from students in written form.

12.00: P. from Banska Bystrica was in the school teaching as part of his teaching practice from Matej Bel University. He asked to come into the lesson which I had jointly prepared with A. (mostly my preparation, as she never has any time even to think). This was agreed. I spent some time talking to him about his teaching which he had been doing in the other building in J.'s room. If he hadn't come over we wouldn't have seen him, such is the division caused by 2 groups of teachers teaching in different buildings.

1.05: I taught my lesson with A: the team-teaching seemed to work and intrigued the students. I am grateful to her for being so willing to participate in anything I suggested, in such a positive frame of mind.

2.00: At this time we all went out to celebrate the end of the week - me, J., P., T., A. and R. *(Concluding remarks on each teacher: I will leave these until tomorrow when I will have left Dolny Kubin and will have distanced myself a little from what is going on.)*

Saturday, November 22nd

Final thoughts on teachers in Dolny Kubin:-

J.

With all his experience it's really surprising that he cuts himself off from the younger teachers, keeping his room and teaching in a separate building. His energy goes into channelled enthusiasms, eg for CALL or project work, and he rather neglects what he is not interested in at the moment. He regards R. as a bit of a pain, because she is outspoken in her views - I think he would be more comfortable with a younger teacher.

E.

Didn't see her except for the focus group. Young, but experienced - seems to speak her mind. I will be very interested to hear her views on the focus group tapes. Her presence

might have changed things in the staffroom and the focus of this project.

T.

The separate interview with her reveals her to be thoughtful and committed to what she is doing. She also seems to be quite adventurous and is prepared to judge the textbook materials negatively as well as positively. I was also impressed with her feedback lesson where she challenged the students to think about their lack of progress.

T. is very overworked with a big teaching load (28 hours) and the possibility of substitutions. She is often in two places at once, setting work for a class while she deals with the problems of some individuals. She manages her time excellently but has realized that it is impossible to prepare each lesson with the detail she would like.

She is in her third year of teaching and I think her qualities are beginning to be appreciated by J., who took her to Zvolen with him to give a presentation on CALL. Some of her classes are not easy to handle (She told me that the 'difficult' group which I substituted was not the worst), but she can obviously manage students by the force of her personality. I appreciate the frankness with which she talked to me. She did not attempt to hide the frustrations of the job or the fact that she did not feel appreciated as much as she should be by the school (and by J.?).

(For more on T., see her interview)

A.

In some ways she impressed me the most. She is a new teacher in her first year, having graduated from the Philosophical Faculty in Presov with a rather theoretical preparation for teaching. She studied methodology with T. H., who "didn't teach us how to teach ... teaching skills". From there she came back to her home village near Dolny Kubin and was given a job in the gymnazium. She expected to be teaching gymnazium students, but much of her work is with Prima children of 11-12 years old. She feels that she is being

asked to teach an age group she wasn't expecting to: this possibility may increase with the arrival of the new Canadian lecturer.

A. is an excellent teacher with a clear plan on how to proceed. She seems to want to master the management aspects of the job first: in the meantime she is quite happy to let coursebooks such as "New Headway" plan the lessons for her. She says that she prefers to go through each book once, before deciding what to omit. As a result, the book plans each lesson for her: she is very good at interpreting teacher's book suggestions and following them to the letter. What she isn't good at is pacing: she tends to race through each activity with out reflecting on what students have got out of it, or if they have really learnt the point in question. Is this the modern disease? Are teachers becoming de-skilled because of coursebooks that cover everything? (Seemingly, because certain things seem to suffer).

A. is an excellent candidate for lots of support, but J. is not giving it. She is very positive about teaching, but her load is too great for an inexperienced but talented individual. If she finds other options in Dolny Kubin, she may take them. Her experiences as an au pair in England and South Africa may make her restless to leave anyway.

She cooperated with me in every way: we team-taught, I observed all her lessons that I could. I wish I had been able to interview her at the end. *(Not possible, because by that time my recording equipment had broken down - a great source of annoyance)*

R.

Very impressive. From J.'s description I thought she would be an elderly and frustrated idealist, out of place in a small town and worried about the fussier details of life such as toilet paper! She appears to be very committed to her young teaching colleagues, and to a certain extent shares their inexperience. Her background is in teaching agriculture (in

Chile) and social work (in Colorado). She has no real ELT experience. It's surprising then that J. said he expected her to guide the younger members of staff, and that he was disappointed that she had to be guided. She in turn is very disappointed in what she sees as J.'s inability to support his staff. As examples of this she cites his unwillingness to divide the classes properly into graded abilities and to get resources properly organized (Resources are inadequate at the moment). I feel that after my visit they may both begin to talk about the areas that divide them and that I will have achieved something constructive.

After I observed her lesson, she was very keen to get my feedback. She wants to do a good job and needs support and encouragement. The support from British ELT textbooks she finds very good - but she can't compare them with US textbooks since she doesn't know any.

Her presence at the school is very important, I feel. The teachers are encouraged by seeing a native speaker find it hard in the same situations as they are in. It shows then that they are not alone.

A final word on facilities:-

The school needs better organized resources for ELT, needs to think about classrooms, the problem of no natural lighting in the teachers' room, and the division between 2 buildings. Solving some of these problems (especially the last) will provide these teachers with much needed support.

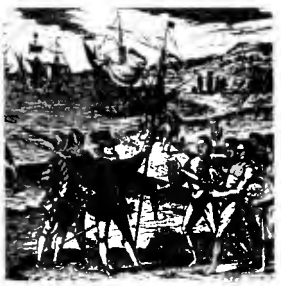
OBSERVATION LESSON 1

Soars, J.& Soars, L. 1993, *Headway Elementary* , Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.92-3

UNIT 13

Question forms – Adverbs – At the railway station

Did you know that?



PRESENTATION (1)

Question forms

1 Work in groups. Answer the quiz!

General Knowledge Quiz

1. **When did the Berlin Wall come down?**
   a 1988 b 1989 c 1990
2. **When did the first American walk on the moon?**
   a 1961 b 1965 c 1969
3. **Where are the Andes mountains?**
4. **Who did the actress Elizabeth Taylor marry twice?**
5. **Who won the 100 metres in the Seoul Olympics?**
   a Ben Johnson b Carl Lewis
   c Ed Moses
6. **How many countries are there in the European Community?**
7. **How much does an African elephant weigh?**
   a 3-5 tonnes b 5-7tonnes
   c 7-9 tonnes
8. **How fast does Concorde fly?**
   a 2,000 kilometres an hour
   b 2,500 kilometres an hour
   c 3,000 kilometres an hour
9. **How far is it from London to New York?**
   a 6,000 kilometres
   b 9,000 kilometres
   c 12,000 kilometres
10. **How old was Charlie Chaplin when he died?**
    a 75 b 83 c 88
11. **What languages do Swiss people speak?**
12. **What did Columbus discover in 1492?**
13. **What sort of music did Elvis Presley play?**
    a Jazz b Blues c Rock'n'roll
14. **What happens at the end of the story *Cinderella*?**
15. **What happened in Chernoby! in 1986?**
16. **Why do birds migrate?**
17. **Which newspaper does Queen Elizabeth read?**
18. **Which language has the most words?**
    a French
    b Chinese
    c English

T 73 Listen and check. Listen carefully to the intonation of the questions. Practise some of the questions.

Grammar question

Underline the question words.
Which questions are in the Past Simple, and which are in the Present Simple?

In groups, write some general knowledge questions.
Ask the class!

Practice

1 Question words

Match a question word in A with an answer in B.

A	B
When?	Five.
Where?	A book.
Who?	60p.
How?	The new one in the High Street.
How many?	Because I need it for my job.
How much?	Jenny.
What?	To the cinema.
Why?	By bus.
Which one?	Last Saturday.

Grammar

Put the words in the correct order to make questions.
Then choose the correct answers from list B above.

a cigarettes you many do a day how smoke?

_____

b go you night where did last?

_____

c does petrol much a cost litre of how?

_____

d last go you shopping did when?

_____

e restaurant did go to which you?

_____

f come today school how you to did?

_____

g shops did buy the at you what?

_____

h party to speak who did the at you?

_____

i English want learn to you do why?

_____

In pairs, ask and answer the questions about yourselves.

3 Listening and pronunciation

T 74 Tick (✓) the sentence you hear.

1 a Where do you want to go?
  b Why do you want to go?
2 a Where does she work?
  b Where does he work?
3 a She walks to the bank.
  b She works in a bank.
4 a He won the match.
  b Who won the match?
5 a Did she marry him?
  b Is she married, Jim?
6 a How old was she?
  b How old is she?
7 a Johnny Page played the guitar.
  b Johnny Page plays the guitar.
8 a Where did you go last night?
  b Where do you go at night?

4 Speaking

Read the introduction about Laurel and Hardy.

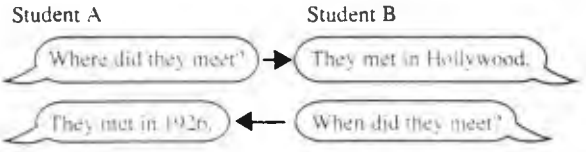
They are called El Gordo e el Flaco in Spain, Helan och Halvan in Sweden, and Stanlio e Olio in Italy, but in English they are called Laurel and Hardy, the most famous comedy duo in cinema history.

Work in pairs. Your teacher will give you some more information about Laurel and Hardy, but you do not have the same information.
Ask and answer questions to complete the information.

Example

Student A
Laurel and Hardy met in ... (*Where?*) in 1926.

Student B
Laurel and Hardy met in Hollywood in . . . (*When?*).



OBSERVATION LESSON 2

Hutchinson, T. 1985, *Project English 1,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.18-19

Hutchinson, T. 1985, *Project English 1 Workbook,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.10

Project 2 . . . . . My World. . . . . .

3

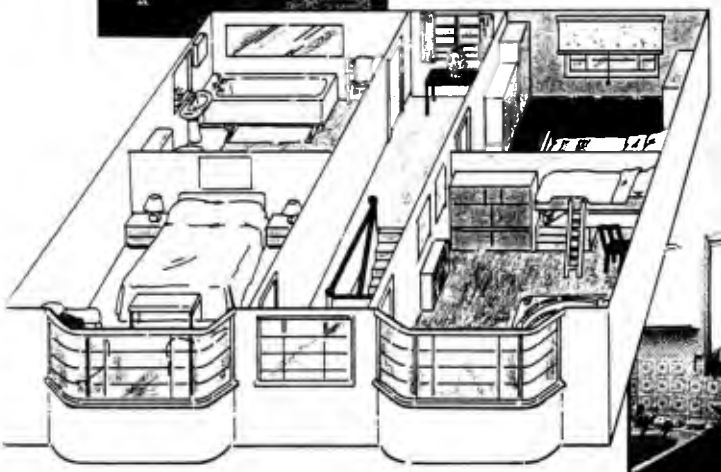
This is our house.
Our address is:
45 Garriton Road,
LONDON SE 10.

Our house has got seven rooms, three downstairs and four upstairs.

This is the living room.

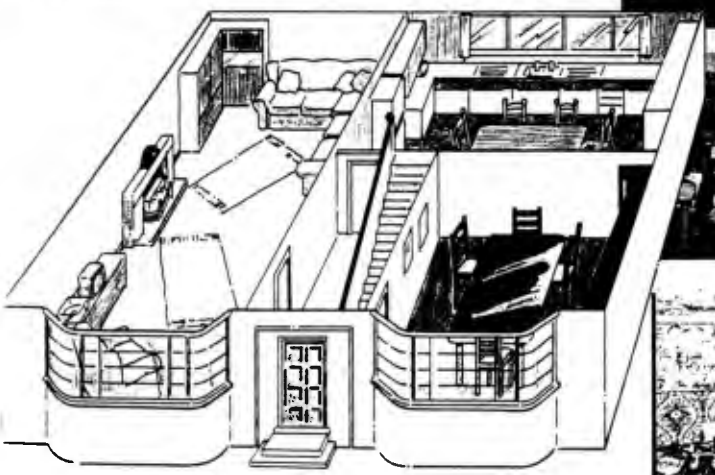
This is the dining room.

And this is the kitchen.



We've got four rooms upstairs:
A bathroom and three bedrooms.

Mum and Dad have got one bedroom, I've got one and Ben's got one.



This is my bedroom.

This is my stereo. I've got about forty records – ten by the Colossal Oranges.

Here's Ben in his bedroom. Ben's got a cassette recorder. And these are his posters.

18

Exercises

1 What have they got?

The girls have all got records. The boys have all got cassettes.
🎧 9 Listen. Say what they have got.

Example

Jane and Mandy
Jane and Mandy have got records.

Ben
Ben has got cassettes.

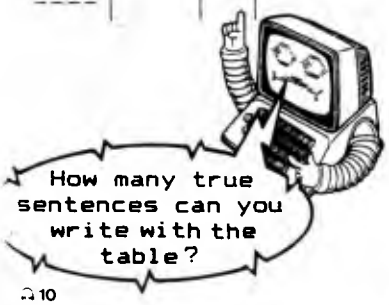
Cues: Cheryl / Ben and Jack / Millie / Mandy and Cheryl

2 Competition

Copy this table. Add:

've **'s** **I** **You** **We** **They** **She** **It** **has**

He	----	got	three rooms.
----	----		two cats.
----	**have**		a name.
----	----		
----	----		
----	----		



🎧 10

Pronunciation practice

Listen and repeat:

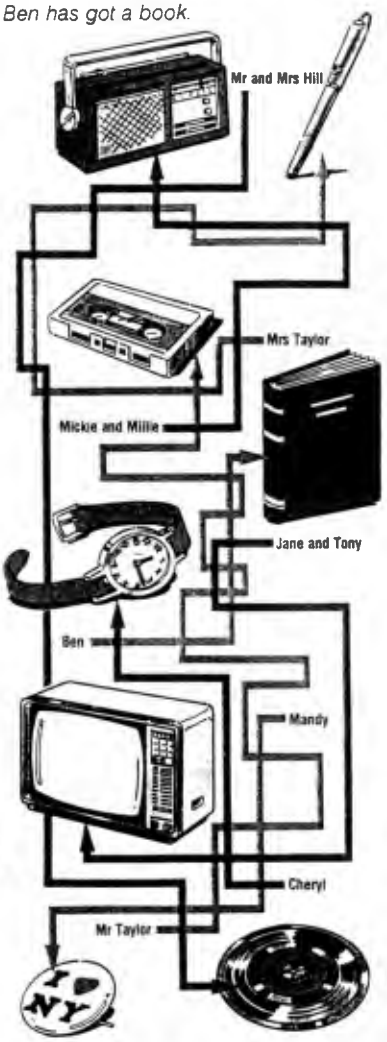
[æ]	[ɑ:]
badge	garden
cat	class
thanks	car
apple	postcard

3 A puzzle:

What have they got?

Example

Ben has got a book.



4 Find Mandy

Look at the pictures of Mandy's house.
🎧 11 Listen.
Say where Mandy is.

Example

She's in the bedroom.

5 Advertisements

Look at these newspaper advertisements for houses and flats.

22 Garden Street: 3 bdrms 1 bthm 1 lvg rm 1 dng rm 1 kn gdn

49 Taylor Street: bdrm lvg rm kn bthm

73 Apple Road: 6 bdrms 2 bthms 2 lvg rms dng rm kn 2 gdns

17 Wilson Road: 2 bdrms kn bthm lvg rm gdn

a What do you think these are? Write them in full.

bdrm bthm kn lvg rm dng rm gdn

Example

bdrm = bedroom

b Say what each house has got.

Example

22 Garden Street has got three bedrooms, a bathroom, a living room, a dining room, a kitchen and a garden.

Your project

My house

1 What is your house or flat like? Draw a plan of it.
Label it and stick it into your *Project Book*.

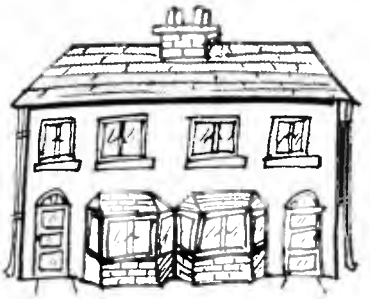
2 Describe your room.

3 Write a newspaper advertisement for your house or flat.

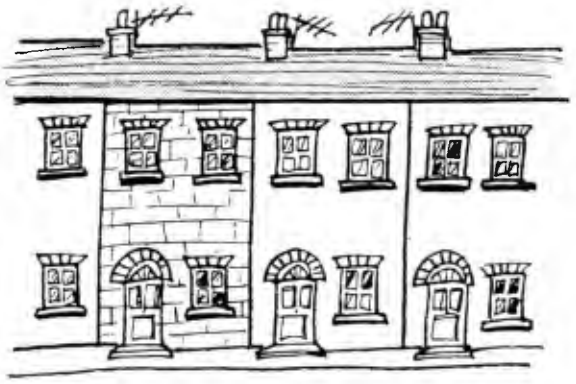
5 Houses

Read this and write what each house has.

Here are three houses: 33 Taylor Street, 14 Liverpool Road and 69 York Street. Downstairs each house has got a living room and a kitchen. The house in Liverpool Road has got a dining room downstairs, too. Number 33 Taylor Street has got two bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs. 14 Liverpool Road has got four bedrooms and two bathrooms upstairs. The house in York Street has got three bedrooms upstairs, but the bathroom is downstairs.



Street



EXAMPLE

33 Taylor Street

Downstairs: living room, kitchen

Upstairs: two bedrooms,

14

OBSERVATION LESSON 3

Soars, J.& Soars, L. 1991, *Headway Pre-Intermediate,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.101-103

Soars, J.& Soars, L. 1991, *Headway Pre-Intermediate Teacher Book,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.106

UNIT 14

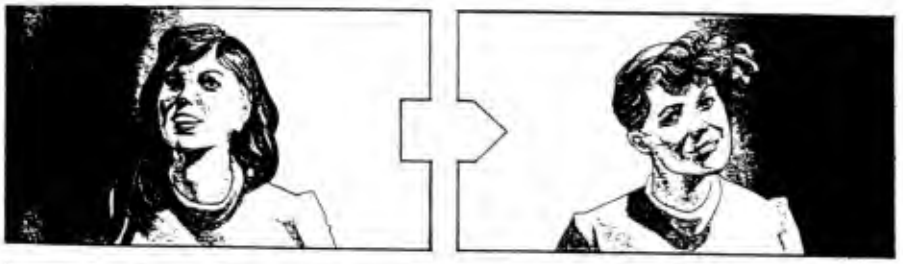
Present Perfect (2) – Telephoning

Giving news

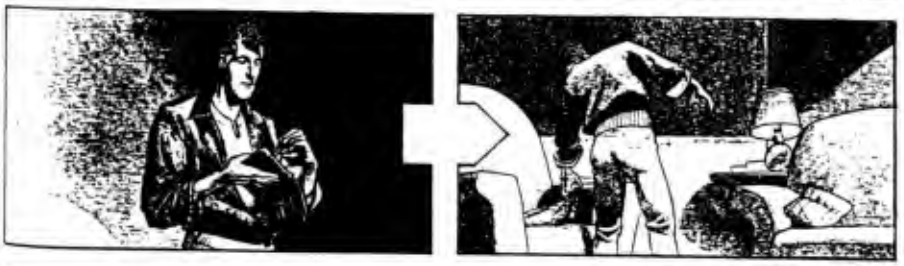
PRESENTATION

1 Notice how the Present Perfect is used to express a past action with a result in the present.

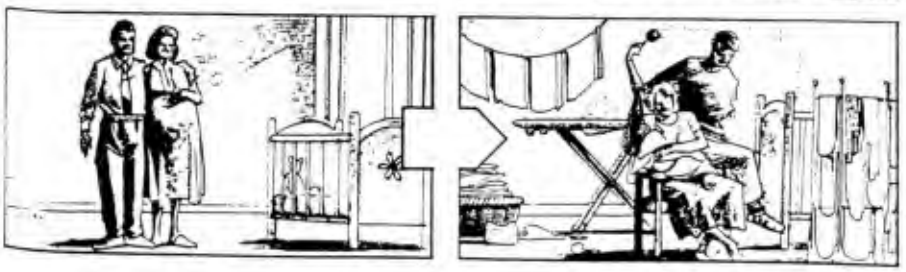
Before now | Now



She's cut her hair.



'I've lost my wallet.'



They've had a baby

2 T.38a You will hear the first part of a conversation between Angela and Tom. They knew each other when they were at school together. They meet again on a London street. They haven't seen each other for a long time!

Listen and answer the questions. The verb forms in your answers are *all* Present Perfect.

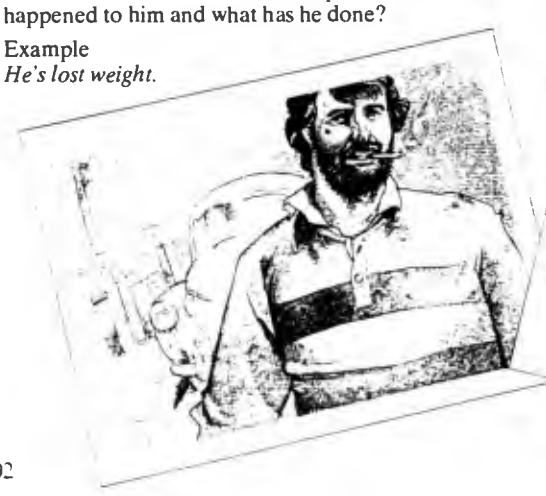
a. Complete the sentences that give Angela's news.
'I _____ to Paris.'
'I _____ a job that I like.'
'I _____ engaged.'
b. What has happened to Alan?
c. How do we know Angela's going to stay in Paris?
d. What news does she give about her parents?
e. In what way does Tom look different?

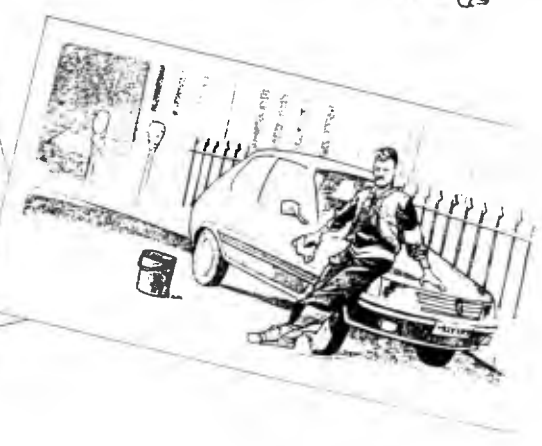
Grammar questions

– Tom says '*I've **been** to Paris*'. Is he there now?
– Angela says '*Alan's **gone** to South America.*' Is he there now? What's the difference between **been** and **gone**?
– Did Tom finish college a long time ago?

3 What is Tom's news? Look at the pictures. What has happened to him and what has he done?

Example
He's lost weight.





PRACTICE

1 Speaking

1 Work in pairs.
Look at the pictures. What has just happened?

2 Angela and Jean-Pierre, her fiancé, are planning their wedding. Look at the list of things to do, and say what they've already done, and what they haven't done yet.

Examples
They've already booked the hotel for the reception.
They haven't ordered the cake yet.

Things to do!!

- Book the hotel for the reception ✓
- Order the cake ✗
- Send out the invitations ✗
- Book the church ✓
- Decide where to go for the honeymoon ✗
- Order the flowers ✓
- Hire a suit (Jean-Pierre) ✓
- Buy a dress (Angela) ✗
- Order the champagne ✗
- Buy the wedding rings ✓

2 Grammar

1 Match a line in **A** with a line in **B**.

A	B
Joe's happy because	he's just burnt the meal.
Richard's sad because	he's just had some good news.
Tim's worried because	his girlfriend's gone away on business.
Malcolm's excited because	his daughter hasn't come home yet and it's after midnight.
Ken's annoyed because	his wife's just had a baby.

2 Complete the following sentences.
- **a.** Mary's crying because she/just/have/some bad news.
- **b.** John's laughing because someone/just/tell/him a joke.
- **c.** My parents are furious because I/lose/the car keys.
- **d.** I'm fed up because someone/steal/my bike.

Language review

Present Perfect Simple

In Unit 7, we saw two uses of the Present Perfect:

1 to refer to an experience
Have you ever been to the United States?

2 to refer to an action or state which continues to the present
She's worked in a bank for five years.

In this unit we have seen another use:

3 to express a past action with a result in the present.
I've lost my wallet.

Translate

I've lost my wallet. Have you seen it?

I lost it yesterday.

She's already bought a ring.

▶ Grammar reference: page 131.

420

Vocabulary

There are exercises on word families and shifting stress as a word changes class (for example, from noun to verb).

Everyday English

In this section, using the telephone is practised in both formal and informal situations.

Notes on the Unit

PRESENTATION (SB page 101)

Present Perfect Simple

T.38a

Note
We suggest you ask students to read the Grammar section for homework *before* you begin the presentation. Ask them to spend five or ten minutes on it, and tell them not to worry if they don't understand it all. They won't!

1 Read the introduction as a class, and look at the pictures. Ask students how the Present Perfect is formed.

2 T.38a Read the introduction. Students listen and answer the questions. Ask them to do this in pairs before giving the answers yourself.
Answers
a. I've moved to Paris.
I've found a job that I like.
I've got engaged.
b. He's gone to South America.
c. She's bought a flat there.
d. They've retired. They've bought a house on the south coast.
e. He's lost weight.
Drill the above sentences around the class, paying attention to contractions and sentence stress. Correct any mistakes.

● Grammar questions (SB page 102)

Answer the Grammar questions as a class.
Answers
– No, he's in London.
– Yes, he is. *I've been to Paris* expresses an experience sometime in my life. (I went to Paris and came back (home).)
He's gone to South America expresses a past action with a result in the present. (He is not here now.)
– No. He has just finished. *Just* means a short time before.

3 Students work in pairs to talk about Tom's news.
Answers
He's lost weight.
He's stopped smoking.
He's cut off his beard.
He's bought a new car.
He's moved to London.

Additional idea
Choose five students, and ask them to look very carefully at the room and the people in it for about fifteen seconds. Send them out of the room. Ask the other students to do something to make the room different. Here are some examples:

clean the board	take off a jumper
open the window	put a chair on a desk
change seats	put the tape recorder on the floor
turn on the light	sit the teacher in a student's chair and
put on a coat	vice versa

Ask the five students to come back in. They must say what has changed.
You've cleaned the board.
Peter has put a coat on. etc.

PRACTICE (SB page 102)

1 Speaking

1 Students work in pairs to say what has just happened in the pictures.
Answers
1 They've just had a crash.
2 The plane's just taken off.
3 He's just woken up.
4 They've just had a meal.
5 He's just given her some flowers.
6 He's just finished reading a book.
7 She's just planted a tree.
8 He has just cleaned the car.
9 He's just scored a goal.
10 She's just written a letter.
You could drill these sentences for pronunciation practice.

2 Read the introduction as a class. Check that students understand *already* and *yet*.
Students work in pairs to practise the sentences.
Answers
They've already booked the hotel for the reception.
They haven't ordered the cake yet.
They haven't sent out the invitations yet.
They've already booked the church.
They haven't decided where to go for the honeymoon yet.
They've already ordered the flowers.
Jean-Pierre has already hired a suit.
Angela hasn't bought a dress yet.
They haven't ordered the champagne yet.
They've already bought the wedding rings.

2 Grammar

1 Students work in pairs to match a line in A with a line in B. Ask them to choose the best one.
Answers
Joe's happy because he's just had some good news.

OBSERVATION LESSON 4
Sion, C. (ed.) 1984, *Recipes for Tired Teachers*, London: Addison Wesley, pp.11-12

DISCUSSION TACTIC I-9

Unit I / GROUP DYNAMICS / Level: Intermediate and above / Time: 45 minutes

Language Function(s): Discussing; justifying; expressing opinions and feelings

Materials: Copies of cartoon figures (page 12)

Before Class

Duplicate copies of the cartoon figures. You will need one copy for each class member plus at least one extra copy. Cut the extra copy into pieces so that there will be one character for each student except for one or two. For these students, prepare blank slips of the same size with the instructions, "Say what you really think."

In Class

1. Distribute the cut-out slips to the students. Either give a deliberately selected apposite (or inapposite) cartoon to each student, or put all the slips into a hat or bag and let each student take one. (This random assignment of characters to students can relax some of the tensions the group may feel about expressing negative feelings.)

2. Tell the class that they have 10–15 minutes for a discussion, to be chaired by one of them. The discussion should concern the material they have been given, but no one should directly reveal the content of his or her piece of paper. Instead, students are to respond *in character*, but without actually quoting the words on their paper. During the discussion, circulate among the students, correcting and helping with vocabulary as necessary.

3. Stop the discussion after about fifteen minutes and pass out copies of the entire page of cartoon figures. Ask the class to identify which students were taking the parts of which cartoon characters and who was telling the truth—saying what he or she really thought. Ask students to justify their answers.

4. At this point, students frequently begin to clarify their attitudes. Select as a new chairperson one of the students who had drawn a slip marked "Say what you really think" and begin a fresh discussion in which people express their real feelings.

Author's Note

Students will participate more honestly and vigorously in the genuine discussion (step 4) than they would without the use of steps 1, 2 and 3. *Discussion Tactic* is a good exercise to get a new or inhibited group to open up or to broach a "danger topic" such as how students really feel about the course. The cartoon characters and the sentences attributed to them can be adapted to elicit opinions on other sensitive topics.

Joan Hewitt

Mr. A: Why should I have to listen to other foreign students' mistakes? The teacher should talk most of the time.

Miss B: I just want to enjoy myself—fun and games for everyone!

Miss C: I hate serious discussions—politics for example. When people disagree there is a very unpleasant atmosphere in the class. Learning should be fun.

Mr. D: I like people—knowing another language means I can meet *more* people. Making mistakes isn't really important if I can communicate.

Mr. E: Most teachers talk too much and dominate the lesson.

Mrs. F: Actually I can learn more from a good textbook than from discussion groups and oral practice.

Mr. G: As an intellectual, I find language useful only to be polite or make social conversation in English.

Miss H: Don't ask me—the teacher knows best.

Mr. I: Grammar is necessary before everything else. Once you know it, *then* you can begin speaking.

APPENDIX N: SCHOOL VISIT JOURNAL (Presov)

Monday 23rd March 1998

10.40: I arrive at the gymnazium after a gap of four months to pick up where I left off in November. I meet all the English teachers who will be involved in the week's activities.

11.00: In G's/T's room I get some more background information from G..... as follows:-

THE SCHOOL

One of not very many experimental gymnazia in Slovakia (see syllabus for experimental schools). Sts have only 4 compulsory subjects: Slovak, English, German or French and PE in 3x45m lessons a week. 12 compulsory lessons in total. There are also 18 optional lessons giving a total of 30.

OPTIONAL LESSONS

They can choose 3 subjects with 4 lessons (3x4=12), also 3 subjects with 2 lessons (3x2=6). The most motivated English sts choose the 4 lesson option and therefore have 3 compulsory and 4 optional, making a total of 7 lessons weekly. It's also possible of course to have 5 (3+2) or just 3 (3+0) lessons, which is the case for the least motivated pupils of English. In 1997/8 100 students selected English as an option. (G. is proud of this as it represents a high percentage. She later gave me these figures. Total no.sts in 4th grade in 4 classes/8 groups = 132. Of these, 100 chose English, 42 German, 9 French and 40 Maths)

MATURITA

There are 4 subjects to pass. In theory only Slovak is compulsory. But in this school at least, English is a "compulsory optional" rather than "optional" for the exam: sts either need Maths or English or French/German. A mock exam for 1998 has already been held at the school (see copy). It was written by a special team and was sponsored by the

British Council. Jana Beresova of the Bratislava MC heads the team. The test is only being used in about 100 pilot schools - other schools just have an oral exam, but these schools will have this written exam as well (see copy of exam and maturita oral topics).

G. showed me that last year's test (also produced by the team) was far too long. This year it looks better but sts in the mock exam still complained about the difficulty of phrasal verb grammar exercises in Part 1, and the length of the reading text in Part 2. But in general their reaction was positive. T. made an interesting point about the oral exam - that under socialism the oral topics were in English. Now because of the 1994 Language Law, they have to be given in Slovak!

TEXTBOOKS

The MofEd recommended their current books (the "Strategies" series) in 1990/1. Because the teachers didn't know any imported books, they followed the recommendation (Blueprint was the alternative recommendation) for the no.1 textbook. But since then some teachers have used "Headway" (M.) or "Streetwise" (J.). In addition, most teachers use traditional Czech or Slovak books such as J.Peprnik's "Anglicky jazyk pro filology" for help with grammar. Because grammar is needed not only for maturita, but above all for university entrance exams. Another useful book is "Anglicka mluvnice" by Karol Hais, which was recommended by Presov faculties for the grammar part of the maturita. This book is in Czech and Slovak versions. Peprnik is still only in Czech.

Two final points: There are also grammar exercise books written by Peprnik and in regular use. Finally, one teacher has started to use imported supplementary books such as: "First Certificate Masterclass". T: "Old ugly textbooks have everything students need for university entrance tests" and "After Strategies no one will pass an entrance test".

REALIA IN TEXTBOOKS

The maturita also contains a cultural component and T. argued that the traditional books gave a better preparation for this with a very standardized view of British or American culture. The cultural topics are prepared for the oral exam with sts learning certain facts and figures by heart.

TEXTBOOKS FOR BEGINNERS

T. said: "Starting with imported textbooks is a real problem. What if someone falls ill and doesn't start the course on time?". It seems that it is difficult to catch up with some of these books since they go so quickly at the beginning. There's also the problem of no translation into Slovak and often no phonetic transcription in wordlists to help with pronunciation. The verdict is that a book such as "Opening Strategies" is not suitable for genuine beginners.

13.30: I left the school for the faculty, having been given copies of the MofEd syllabus as well as the mock maturita written exam and oral topics.

The week's schedule for visits and lessons is:-

Tue.24/03	8.00 (J. observation)	2a: Building Strategies U13
Tue.24/03	9.50 (G observation)	4b: Studying Strategies U8
Tue.24/03	12.30 (teaching)	4th grade? (Advanced) Peprnik U21
Tue.24/03	13.35 (G observation)	1d: Opening Strategies U12/13
Wed.25/03	8.00 (J. observation)	3c: Streetwise, p.24.
Wed.25/03	10.50 (teaching)	3rd grade: conversation class
Wed.25/03	11.45 (teaching)	1b: Opening Strategies U9
Wed.25/03	12.30 (M. observation)	2c: Building Strategies U9
Wed.25/03	14.30 Focus group	
Thu.26/03	10.50 (teaching)	4b: Studying Strategies U8
Thu.26/03	11.45 (teaching)	2a: Building Strategies U13
Thu.26/03	12.30 (T. observation)	2c: Building Strategies U12
Thu.26/03	13.25 (teaching)	4th grade? (Advanced) Peprnik U21

Tuesday 24th March

7.45: I arrive at the school in time for the first lesson observation - J. using "Building Strategies". I keep out of the way until the beginning of the lesson because I know she is quite nervous about my visit. So we don't really have much opportunity to discuss things before the lesson starts. I then get taken to see the school director.

8.00: The lesson starts. The twelve students are quite mixed in terms of ability, but generally the level means that the materials are not challenging enough for them.

Observation Notes Lesson 1 (8.00-8.45) Teacher: J.

Class Profile:	Class 2a, 16 yrs., 11 girls/1 boy, Elementary
Lesson aims:	Reporting events
Materials:	Building Strategies U13 ("Mandy is missing")
Pre-lesson: comments	"One of the best units in the book because of the story"

Activities:

1. J. revises the story from the unit with everyone saying a sentence. (They all seemed to do the chain story very well).

2. "What happened to Mandy?". Sts are asked individually. There are possible answers in the police reports on p.94. J. teaches "witness".

3. Roleplay: police interrogating witnesses (But the answers are already given in the book, so no chance to be creative! Perhaps sts should be making new questions? It would also be nice to go beyond the text and really make them think eg "What do you think of the advice given by the sweet shop owner?") Although it's a mechanical task, sts seem to do it quite happily. Then J. teaches "canal" and asks "Why do people build canals?" (This makes them think!). She also has a map of the UK showing canals.

4. Listening: to an interview with the third witness, Jack. Teacher gives prompts on the whiteboard and sts note down information (An improvement on the book where there are no question prompts). Sts compare answers by shouting them out. (Do they all understand? The book could give some hints for checking on this) J. varies by also asking individuals.

5. The story continues with a dialogue between policeman and policewoman. J. uses the picture to introduce this dialogue. Sts are asked to cover the dialogue in the book and just listen (no task??). They easily understood this and could answer most of J's questions.

6. Sts answer questions in the book in pairs to check understanding of the dialogue once more. (One st has a problem - J. explains in Slovak). J. corrects confusion between "slept" and "slipped". She explains "launch" and "climb down" in Slovak. Homework: prepare a story about Mandy and what happened to her.

Post-lesson: The material is interesting enough but has to be adapted to really push the students and make it a challenge for them. J. says that while this unit has a good story, other units don't. In other units she selects a lot and omits activities. Sometimes there's a problem teaching functions such as invitations because "we don't have it" (Slovaks have invitations for weddings but that's about it).

J. changes the grammar in U13, omitting the suggested grammar and leaving it till the next unit. She also adds extra text for "appearance".

J. commented on the listening task where the book asks sts to "make notes" She is aware of the need to provide a focus. She also commented on the lack of grammar and grammar exercises. The kinds of practice they need for the tests are missing. For this reason J. doesn't use "Developing Strategies" and says that "Streetwise" is better for grammar.

Another comment about "Streetwise": J.is worried that sts won't tell the truth when topics come "close to home" eg on smoking. Sometimes discussions won't work because sts are afraid to give their own opinions. She also discussed a student teacher who had over-personalized a topic - asking students to make invitations for a funeral.

J's reason for using "Strategies": "Longman were the first publishers to appear after the revolution. Longman was very fast to come here and show the books: that's why many schools chose their books.

J. finally asked about the level of her English and confessed that it was the first time ever that a native speaker had come to her lesson!

8.45: After the lesson a long discussion with J. She reveals that she is not very happy with the school continuing to use the "Strategies" series, which now seems out of date. (She prefers "Streetwise"). I ask to see a lesson in which she attempts to teach grammar with "Streetwise" and this is agreed.

9.50: I go to G's first lesson . Once again no real chance for a pre-lesson discussion, since she is running round everywhere.

Observation Notes Lesson 2 (9.50-10.35) Teacher: G.

Class Profile:	Class 4b, 17-18 yrs., 8 girls/4 boys, Advanced.
Lesson aims:	Talking about health
Materials:	Studying Strategies U8
Pre-lesson:	(No time for pre-lesson discussion.)

Activities:

1. Discussion of who would/wouldn't like to be a doctor. (A nice warm-up activity for the topic of the unit, which elicited some good comments)

2. G. turns to oral exercises,p.69 to check some vocabulary to describe the human body. Sts look at picture of a body and name parts (checking homework).

3. Roleplaying a dialogue in pairs: "Is anything wrong with you?" "It's my ..." (They are given just a few minutes for this). Another pairwork homework is checked: p.62, the doctor's conversation with Lynne. G. asks if they have the same replies as in the dialogue ...

4. Listening to the dialogue, Ex.2. G. gets sts to predict the answers to the questions, stopping the tape.

5. Lynne goes home and tells her husband about the visit to the doctor. Aim: reporting what happened at the doctor's, paying attention to sequence of tenses (pairwork again). Two sts act out the dialogue paying attention to the reported speech. G. corrects as they go along.

6. Reading about appendicitis. G. has brought a medical handbook in Slovak to show the sts. (I'm not really clear why). She also shows a specialized dictionary for English/Slovak medical terms. Sts must now read the short article and pick out some new words.Individuals explain. (Do they all understand? The pace is fast).

7. Listening and completing the doctor's notes. G. has written some key expressions on the board. (Problems for sts to see the words!) After the tape has been played, G. asks sts if their pronunciation of the words was correct. Asks Natalia to write translation and phonetic transcription of words using a dictionary, but too late because the bell rings.

Post-lesson: G. thinks the materials are difficult because they force sts to be 'creative'. For example, no guidance is given in the skeleton dialogues on p.62. This seems to be a general problem, not just in these materials. G. also wanted to transfer the content to Slovakia to make it more relevant.

11.00: I am left on my own to prepare for my own teaching and to write up this journal.

12.30: I have my first experience of teaching, trying to use some grammar material from Peprnik's very traditional coursebook (U.21), which has been causing everyone problems.

Of course it isn't any easier for me than for anyone else, but somehow I think the other teachers believe I can contribute some ideas towards explaining when to use "get/become/grow/fall/turn" in changes of state. I plan the lesson very carefully to include something creative (haiku poems containing the demon words) and something to attract their attention (blackboard drawings). G., J. and M. come to observe. The students do the activities willingly enough, but are a bit bewildered by the approach - I must be doing something unexpected. (I'll try to find out what it is). At the end of the lesson there is no time to read their poems, which is a pity.

13.55: I observe G's second class (see Obs.III) and then dash off to interview Rita R. (Pedagogical Faculty, Presov)

Observation Notes Lesson 3 *(13.35-14.15)* *Teacher: G.*

Class Profile:	Class 1d, 14-15 yrs., 7 girls/7 boys, False Beginners
Lesson aims:	Expressing surprise/ descriptions
Materials:	Opening Strategies U13
Pre-lesson: comments	Not much time for discussion once again except to establish that the group has only been studying English for 7 months.

Activities:

1. Pairwork: practising a telephone conversation. OS p.97, mapped dialogue about losing a book. (Checking homework). Sts then act out the dialogue in front of the class. G. asks if there were any mistakes. Sts want to know if they can speak Slovak for this and G. says: "You can. It's grammar" (G. gave an excellent grade to some sts who volunteered and did well. These grades go in the class grade book. One st didn't get excellent because she read the phrases.)

2. More checking of homework. In pairs sts ask questions based on exercise in U13, p101 eg "When did you get up?" "I got up at ....." They have to do this with books closed. This practice is done across the class nominating the answerer. (This is a good way to get everyone's full attention. It also got everyone involved, even weaker students. They tended to have lots of problems with meaningless questions coming to the fore, and some explanation was needed in Slovak).

3. Grammar (??): Surprise and interest, p.102. Ex: "Tm English" "Oh, are you?". G. gives an explanation in Slovak first. (This activity is as much intonation as "grammar", but the book doesn't emphasize this aspect at all). Sts then practise the sentences using the new form. G. wanted them to transfer the context to Slovakia (a much

better idea!). They got the idea eventually. (It seems difficult to get them out of mechanical mode once in it, but it's worth the effort!) G. let them do the book sentences and then said: "And now reality!", whereupon sts made their own meaningful sentences. (But dangers abound. "Is anyone in your family unemployed" is risky ground).
Intonation wasn't really mentioned in the end. A pity, and the fault of the book.

4. Prepare a description of the picture on p.100. Pairs: Who? What? Where?
Sts start to give their descriptions of the hotel scene. G. elicits words such as "receptionist" It is clear that the woman in the picture is being questioned by the police.

5. Listening (no focus task). The scene from the picture is brought to life in a recorded dialogue. Police ask questions and the woman answers. G. asks questions to get information from the sts.

6. Listen and repeat. Everyone is supposed to repeat the expressions from the tape. (Once again a good chance missed to focus on pronunciation). Homework: p.103, ex.3. Write about yourselves.

Post-lesson: No specific discussion, but see journal notes for related comments.

Wednesday 25th March

7.45: I arrive early again to meet with Jana because I have asked to observe her grammar lesson based on "Streetwise".

8.00: I observe J's lesson (see Obs.IV). Most of the lesson actually isn't really to do with grammar, but we get there in the last 10 minutes. J. is much more relaxed about my attending. I don't think she is nervous at all, which is very encouraging. At any rate, she seems to transmit this to the students, who seem very relaxed throughout.

Observation Notes Lesson 4 (8.00-8.45) Teacher: J.

Class Profile: Class 3c, 16-17 yrs., 16 girls/0 boys, Lower Intermediate

Lesson aims: Future plans, future progressive tense.

Materials: Streetwise p.24, "Puppy fat and sheep's oil", discussion of a swimmer who is planning to swim the Channel.

Pre-lesson: comments Although this is a weak intermediate group, sts are hardworking. They will come to class having thought about their ambitions. The book is a bit short on listening material with proper listening tasks: often the listening texts are just there to focus on language and to get them to repeat. This can be a bit boring for them.

Activities:

1. Checking homework. What are their ambitions? Ex: to study biology and be a teacher, to be successful, to work abroad. Sts are asked to explain using future tenses with "will" and "going to". (J. usually comments in English, occasionally in Slovak). Some of the responses were very funny with one girl saying she will be satisfied with just a dog rather than a man. (A problem with "when I will meet ...". They have obviously picked this up).

2. Comparing two pictures of a boy about to swim the Channel. "What is he going to go?" "What is he wearing?" J. has to explain "sheep's oil/puppy fat" in Slovak.
(She had to rely on the TB to explain the title and wondered why the book had provided such an unintelligible title).

3. Listening and questions. The boy is being interviewed about his swim.
J. simplifies the questions in the book (a good idea since otherwise there is too much to focus on! This seems to be a regular need for Slovak teachers - to think about ways of simplifying listening tasks for the students). The listening contains lots of examples of future progressive, the grammar focus of the unit.

4. J. checks the answers to the listening task. Teaches "Channel" and asks for ways of crossing it .... ferry, tunnel etc. The tape is then played again for the more detailed comprehension questions in the book: eg "What will he be doing to get ready?" "He will be eating high energy foods" J. writes answers on the board and does some explaining in Slovak.

5. Grammar presentation. J. writes on the board and explains/elicits in Slovak.
Writes the name "future progressive" and gives examples (also from the text).
She draws a line diagram from March to July to explain "I will be doing X in the next few months". More examples: "This time tomorrow I will be skiing in the Tatras". Teaches: this time tomorrow, this time next week etc. They translate.

6. Practice: Tom's diary p.25. "What will he be doing at .....?"
Homework is the second practice exercise.

Post-lesson:

J. thinks that the students have now learned the new grammar mechanically.
Now she wants to see if they know when to use it. Next lesson she will be looking out for this. She thinks that the TB is very useful for preparing grammar lessons. She usually works with the TB notes.

When grammar like this is explained, it needs to be in Slovak - in this case because there are no progressive tenses in Slovak. She doesn't agree with books which tell you always to use English. Likes the idea that complex things can be explained in Slovak, and she sometimes uses Slovak also for vocabulary teaching.

10.00: I am preparing visual aids for my lesson (T's class) later in the day and talking to T. She has a very impressive collection of realia (in the English sense), even down to bus tickets and train timetables which she has kept from a trip to the UK (?). The teachers don't have too many resources. They can photocopy, although this is strictly controlled

and has to be ordered the day before - there is no such thing as spontaneously copying an idea for a lesson. The school seems reasonably supplied with textbooks, but as elsewhere the sts get to keep nothing that they don't pay for. Sets of books (occasionally) and A4 handouts (more often) are distributed and then returned.

10.50: J. has to substitute for another teacher, so she has asked me to help her fill in. Neither of us really has time to prepare the lesson, so it will be the most improvised 45 minutes which I get to experience at the school. Before I go to the class I discuss with T. the codes for classes, 3a,3b,3c etc. The letters do not indicate streaming, but within each class there is usually a division into two groups and this division does separate stronger and weaker sts.

11.35: Just a few minutes left before I go to T.'s class to teach beginners for the first time in the school. I have prepared rather an elaborate game with questions broken up into words and written on individual cards. I hope it will work because both T. and G. will be observing.

12.20: the lesson turned out to be a lot of fun, even though the game took most of the time and was chaotic. In spite of this the teachers who were watching seem to have been encouraged to try similar things for themselves. I will now go to M.'s class (Obs.V) to observe, even though I feel tired after the last two lessons and need a break.

Wednesday 25th March 1998: Observation Notes Lesson 5 (12.30-13.15) Teacher: M.

Class Profile:	Class 2c, 16 yrs., 11 girls/10 boys, Mixed level
Lesson aims:	Talking about holidays.
Materials:	Building Strategies U9, p.70
Pre-lesson: comments	This group is very mixed in level. They have all been asked to do some reading homework (p.70 "Letters to the Editor"). An extra homework was to describe some pictures of the weather.

Activities:

1. Sts give their best wishes to a boy for his name day. One girl is asked to stand up and do this on behalf of the rest of the class.

2. Homework describing pictures is checked. M. checks/corrects what is said as individuals read. (It's not easy for the others to pay attention. There is no real suggestion in the materials concerning how to use these pictures imaginatively). M. asks: "What is the weather like today?" Individuals reply. Others listen.

3. Letter about party political broadcasts on TV (p.70). This was set for homework and now sts ask M. about difficult words: she in turn checks their understanding and translates some expressions. Book questions were also set: eg "What are the government going to do about day nurseries/student grants etc?" (The book topic isn't exciting and the array of questions in their inevitable order isn't designed to get students excited).

M. then asks sts for words from the text or questions that are similar in Slovak and English. They seem to wake up a bit here, contributing "national", "nuclear" etc. M. continues the discussion in Slovak and now they are really awake.
M's conclusion: "There are international terms which are almost the same in any language" (a useful observation). This somehow turns into a discussion of politics in Britain with sts being asked about the Prime Minister, political parties etc.

4. Listening activity, p.70. They have to listen to people's holiday plans and fill in a chart. M. turns the chart headings into questions eg "Country/Place" becomes "Where are they going to go?" Sts listen the first time and pick up quite a lot: they are happy to answer questions after one listening. But M. isn't satisfied and plays the tape again. (When sts do answer, it's always individuals and there's no real way of knowing if others have understood or have even bothered to complete the task. A final note: M. has a tendency to supply answers for sts or to finish them off).

5. Writing sentences about the woman in the listening (using "going to"). The same st is asked to read his sentences out loud ... the rest have to listen.

Post-lesson:

We discussed the importance of the international words mentioned by M. A monolingual coursebook wouldn't think of emphasizing these.

For M, it wasn't a problem that the topic changed from the weather to politics within one class. She liked the switch of topics.

As for their interest in topics, the teacher should guide them and not just talk about pop groups. "We can't always do what they feel like doing". These are useful topics. "If they don't feel like it today, they will feel it tomorrow".

M. says: "Don't listen to the students too much. We know their age group and interests, but it shouldn't be the priority". Later, when the final exams come, they will realize that these topics are useful. "We know what they need in the future". Guidance is important. If a teacher is too friendly, they abuse it. "The teacher should be the older friend". What if the book changes to cover more modern topics? M. says: "No problem. I am flexible". She also thinks that young people don't want to look at things "under the skin". Perhaps quality of family background determines this, according to M.

14.00: The teachers are ready for the focus group interview if I can get my tape recorder to work. They seem relaxed about it and talk for about an hour without stopping. Even in English, people seem to be giving honest opinions. I think the fact that they are not able to express their thoughts in Slovak (because of my presence) is outweighed by the fact that they feel that they understand a little of the aims of the research project. It seems that it's always a good idea to have the focus group interview after teachers have got used to the presence of the interviewer in the school.

15.00: We all leave the school.

Thursday 26th March

7.45: As always, I arrive early. I meet G. in the staff room and she talks to me about supplementing materials and the problem of dull texts in "Strategies" (Studying Strats. especially, cf the appendicitis text). "Friendship" is the main supplementary resource (cost Sk90): it's usually possible to get 90% of sts subscribing. G.distributes to the sts, as do other teachers. The topics are particularly good for the "realia" section of the maturita (some, not all). Even very general topics such as basic facts on the USA are useful. There are also "Prirucka pre maturantov" books which are very useful for the oral topics - especially for the less advanced sts. Also useful is "The English-speaking countries" - another book of facts. And the school makes use of its American lecturer, K., who I met briefly on Monday. The ratio of K.'s lessons is 1:3 - for every ns lesson there are three lessons by Slovak teachers. A good ratio, I think.

G. also refers to the British coursebooks when preparing for the exam topics (eg travel), giving references from each of the books which have been studied (even going back to early beginner books). What about giving up the old topics and starting new ones? Some teachers will be unwilling to give them up. There are topics that have always been

"recommended" in the syllabus (see syllabus docs). That's why, unofficially, topics are more or less the same in all schools. Some universities also have these topics as part of their entrance exams (cf FF Bratislava). G. thinks that sts need to prepare the topics. In spite of the fact that Presov PdF doesn't have an oral component in the entrance exam, the FF does. And even if sts are going to study management in an Economics Faculty, they will have an oral exam in English.

9.00: G. is talking about the teachers' salaries. They depend on number of years, hours per week taught and qualifications. School directors are also given some extra amounts of money to pay for extras, so some heads pay modern languages teachers more (a divisive policy according to G.) I asked about the situation in Raymana Gymnazium. G. says that nobody knows: "It's a secret". Under socialism it appears that salaries were published and extra monies as well, so everybody knew. There were also criteria for the extra payments. "We knew how much everyone gets". Now there is a large amount of power vested in the Head: "Everything is on him. Our Head is a teacher of maths and physics. What does he know about modern languages?" G. thinks that the whole system is not very democratic. It seems that the school's Head is new and the teachers are not sure of his way of thinking in this respect. G. thinks that in private enterprise all of this would be OK, but not in a State School - "Why shouldn't we know?"

9.45: T. and I began to discuss another problem of 'modern' textbooks - the fact that there is just too much to take in in any unit or on any page. Too many pictures, too many exercises. T. showed me a coursebook from Finland (which she visited a few years ago because the school has a twin there). In this book there is one text to one page, one picture or chart to one page etc. There's also a mini-encyclopedia at the back with basic information on cultural topics mentioned in the book - people, places and events. This whole conversation made me think of the importance of simplicity, in terms of content and in terms of presentation and design.

10.00: I have now prepared my lessons for the next four periods - three of which I will teach, and the fourth in which I persuaded T. to let me come and observe her. She has two reservations about this: (1) that she hasn't been observed by a ns before, and worries about mistakes; (2) because she says that so far I've only seen good classes, whereas her class is only average or even below average. I will be interested to compare them with other groups have seen.

10.50: A period of non-stop teaching and observing begins. First of all I teach an intermediate class (G.'s) on the topic of health and hospitals. After that, straight into an elementary class teaching physical description (J.'s group). I then officially say goodbye to all the teachers together before going to observe T.'s class (Obs.VI).

Observation Notes Lesson 6 (12.30-13.15) Teacher: T.

Class Profile:	Class 2c, 16 yrs., 5 girls/7 boys, Elementary
Lesson aims:	Comparisons
Materials:	Building Strategies U12 ("Home again!") "Friendship" magazine
Pre-lesson: comments	T. was mysterious about the aims of the lesson except to say that she would give a regular lesson with an average group, and wouldn't change her planning at all because an observer was present.

Activities:

1. The lesson begins with individual sts being asked to come out to talk in front of the class. A boy is quizzed about homework about St.Patrick (from "Friendship"). Sts ask: "Who was St.Patrick? Where is St.Patrick's Day celebrated?"
(It's interesting to see students testing each other on the homework topic.)
St. now recites a poem which he has learnt off by heart. T. asks the others what grade he should receive. "Excellent" is the reply and it goes in the grade book.
T. asks if anyone else wants to come out but there are no volunteers.
(This tradition of reciting in front of the class is apparently common in classes where the Slovak language is being taught and thus crosses subjects).

2. Warm-up activity. Sts are asked to think about what they associate with HOME. They come to the board and complete a word web with words/expressions like "good food", "parents", "my room", "Presov", "family" etc.
T. asks them : "What do you think of when you come back home?".
She teaches "looking forward to + verb + ing" to help them with their replies.
They then practise the relies using this expression.

3. Unit 12, p. 84. Sts look at the picture of Barbara and Rod while T. asks "What do we know about her?" The same question is asked for Rod.

4. Listening to the dialogue. "First just listen ...." The dialogue is about Rod and Barbara unexpectedly meeting. T. asks: "Do you remember their last meeting?" (He couldn't come to the airport because he was busy. Barbara was angry). T. asks questions about characters' feelings, getting beyond the surface text.

5. Listen and repeat. Sts listen to each line of dialogue and repeat it. T. focusses on expressions such as "Forget it" and "Oh, that's alright", getting sts to write these on the board. She also picks out "bigger" (it is now being revealed that the focus of the lesson will be on comparisons). Sts are asked to pick out other examples such as "noisier", "dirtier", "more beautiful". (The jump to grammar presentation means that sts really don't have much repetition practice - no focus on pronunciation, stress, intonation etc. This seems to be a general characteristic of teachers using coursebooks with this sort of stylized dialogue). Sts now ask about some words which they don't understand eg "luggage"

6. Homework set: reading comprehension questions on the dialogue (no extra instructions or guidance given).

7. Presentation of comparatives/superlatives: T. focusses on formation of the words eg big/bigger, noisy/noisier. She then asks them to form the superlatives, although this is (deliberately?) not covered in the unit. (This might normally be considered unsound and confusing, but since they seem to know the forms already, perhaps it's inevitable).

T. then switches her attention to longer words which take "more/most". Sts are asked to write examples on the board. She then asks: "How do you form the rule?" (still speaking in English rather than in Slovak). The rule: one+ two-syllable words end in -er/-est, otherwise use "more/most". T. then discusses the difference between English/Slovak syllables and talks about dropping -y endings.

Finally, she gives all of these explanations in Slovak to make sure they understood. (All of this means that a good deal of time is spent on the grammatical forms themselves, and on explaining rules). T. concludes: "These are the basics". She will give more details later.

8. Sts practise using the structure in sentences such as: "Kosice is bigger than Presov" or "The High Tatras are the highest mountains in Slovakia". Most of the class get to practise in this way.

13.35: I teach the final class (the other half of G.'s group that I hadn't taught). Same lesson as on Tuesday.

14.15: I finish the final lesson at the school and go for lunch with G.. We will keep in contact. I have promised her some authentic texts, as well as the transcript of the focus

group interview. They have nothing else which they need to send me. Before I left I asked for some old Slovak textbooks written by Pytelka and Repka, which they gave me. They should prove a useful reference for analysing this data later on. I will leave further comments till tomorrow.

Friday 27th March: Summarizing comments on the visit

The Teachers

A day after leaving the school I can reflect a little more calmly on the teaching staff and the school itself. Only four teachers were really involved in this work, G., J., M. and T.. Although there are other English teachers in the school, they showed no interest in providing me with some support, or in discussing day-to-day problems. During my November visit, I met J., a teacher of Slovak and English, with the main emphasis on Slovak. Although he seemed keen to get involved in November, when I invited him to the focus group discussion, he said he was too busy and I did not see him at all for the rest of my stay. Another teacher, K., has less of an excuse for not showing some willingness to get involved. She is a very experienced full-time teacher and has even taught colleagues now working at the Presov PdF. But she would not even speak to me, communicating by a series of nods and a few mumbled words. I invited her to the focus group but was not surprised when she did not appear. It would have been interesting to visit one of her classes, but from her point of view this would have been greeted with alarm - probably justified, since I suspect she isn't a very inspiring teacher. Now for the others ....

G.

She is the head of dept. with 28 years teaching experience. She initially seemed very nervous about my visit, but it seems that this is just her personality, always running from place to place and worrying about details. This trait proved very useful: she was always

arriving with useful documents and pieces of information that she thought would be of interest. I am indebted to her for providing me with the first school syllabus I have seen (see copy), which has the stamp of authority of the MofEd. , as well as school-leaver profiles, school-leaving tests, entrance exams for university, and so on.

In her teaching she tries to preserve a balance between tradition and new ideas. She uses a combination of UK-imported and "old-fashioned" Slovak coursebook materials, since she can see defects in both and seeks a balance between the two. Her timetable of teaching hours and extra responsibilities means that she has very little time for new ideas, and relies heavily on what she knows and her intuitive idea of what is likely to be successful. I saw a lot of evidence of her trying to make topics in the coursebook accessible and more motivating to sts, but she has half an eye on what will interest them and half an eye on what they will need for future exams.

T.

I was told that she had been quite ill and had taken time off work over a long period. She was friendly and supportive towards me, but obviously very worried about letting me come in to visit one of her lessons, arguing that the group was weak or that the lesson wasn't interesting. Eventually, I persuaded her to let me see one class.

She uses many traditional techniques in her teaching that cross over from one subject to another, such as getting the sts to recite poems or facts by heart in front of the class. In other respects, however, she is quite 'modern', using selected items from her huge bank of authentic materials. She is a collector of any sort of realia (in the English sense): connected to this, no doubt, is the fact that of all the teachers she is the most organized. I'm sure she would make an excellent resources manager for the whole school.

M.

During my brief stay in November, she was the teacher who seemed most willing to get involved with my teaching/observation schedule. So it's somewhat surprising that during this visit I only saw one of her classes and didn't teach any. In some respects I am grateful for her reduced involvement because of all the teachers she is the most domineering and tended to talk in long turns during the focus group interview. Although I admire her enthusiasm for her work and her general positive approach, I found her a bit of a bully in the classroom. She didn't seem prepared to listen to students' contributions in class, and seemed to think that the onus was always on them to listen to her.

Symptomatic of her approach is that she always seemed satisfied if one or two sts answered her: she didn't seem bothered about what the others might be thinking while individuals performed. I realize that this gives a rather negative picture of her - this may have been influenced by a desire to impress me with her confident manner and no-nonsense approach. On the positive side, she seems to combine elements of more traditional approaches to teaching with a more communicative approach. For example, she made just the right use of translation in the lesson which I saw (in my opinion), and seemed to realize that Slovak is a useful resource to be used in measured doses. Her approach to the listening task also showed evidence of quite progressive thinking. An interesting mix: I would quite like to see her teaching a class without my presence disturbing the group.

J.

Although very experienced, she was easily the youngest. She is also the teacher in the group who is most likely to experiment, and clearly showed her impatience that the "Strategies" books were still the official coursebooks in the school. When I observed her first lesson she was rather nervous and intent on showing her authority in front of the sts. I later learned that this wasn't entirely due to nerves - she is rather a disciplinarian and believes in pushing sts as much as possible, and not letting them relax too much.

She seems to be quite a dedicated teacher, well-prepared and reflective. During the focus group discussion her views showed that she is aware of the delicate balance between traditional and more progressive ideas. She seems fiercely determined to keep hold of those aspects of traditional practice which she thinks are worth preserving, while at the same time being open to new ideas. When I asked the teachers in the focus group if they feared being compared to ns, she was also the one who defended the Slovak teacher, pointing out the strengths of the nns vs ns teacher.

The School

Seems to be quite well equipped and the rooms seem spacious enough, both classroom and teachers' rooms. I was even given my own office space and desk - very different from DK! But once again, as in DK, there is division between different groups of teachers in different "kabinets". Only in the "zborovna" (staff room) do they all have a chance to meet. This tends to promote cliques among teachers, but not as much as in other schools which I have visited as a BC teacher trainer.

I met the school director very briefly and was impressed by his formality. As I have said elsewhere, he is new in the job and has just overseen the removal of the entire school to a "new" building. I think the school has benefited from the move in terms of extra space, and also for the possibilities that this space allows in terms of teaching methods. Finally, photocopying is possible at the school, although it is done centrally and is strictly controlled. This means that teachers do have access to an essential resource for producing teaching materials - though copies made are never given to sts for them to keep.

OBSERVATION LESSON 1

Abbs, B. & Freebairn, I., 1984, *Building Strategies*, London: Longman pp.94-5

Unit 13

Set 1 Narration: past events

POLICE REPORT FROM WITNESS

Missing person Mandy Ingrams

Date: 25/9

Name of witness: Mrs Joan Ingrams
57 Bath Road, Bristol

Relationship: Mother of missing child

Mrs I. – got up at 7.30. Had breakfast with family – husband and son, Mark, 4 years old. Daughter Mandy got ready for school, put on grey coat, said it was teacher's birthday, wanted to buy some flowers. Mrs I. gave her 20p. M. left house at 8.45. School is 5 minutes walk from house. Mrs I. has not seen her since then.

POLICE REPORT FROM WITNESS

Missing person Mandy Ingrams

Date: 25/9

Name of witness: Mrs Marjorie Hawkins,
The Sweet Shop, Central Parade,
London Road, Bristol.

Relationship: None.

Mrs. H. – owns sweet shop, Central Parade. Opened shop at 9. Little girl wearing grey coat came in. Red ribbon in hair. Girl had 20p. Girl asked, 'Do you sell flowers?' Mrs H. said 'No, I don't, but there are some pretty wild flowers near the canal.' Girl said, 'Thank you.' Left shop at 9.10

Roleplay 1

Work in pairs. You are the policeman, your partner is Mrs Ingrams. Use the notes in the Police Report to interview Mrs Ingrams. Ask questions like:

What time did you get up?
What did you do then?
Did your husband take Mandy to school?
What did Mandy do then?
Did she say anything before she left?
Did you give her any money?
When did Mandy leave the house?
How far away is the school?
Have you seen her since?

Roleplay 2

Work in pairs. You are the policeman, your partner is Mrs Hawkins. Use the notes in the Police Report to interview Mrs Hawkins. Ask questions like:

What do you do?
What time did you open your shop this morning?
Did a little girl come into the shop?
What was she wearing?
How much money did she have?
What did she say?
What did you say?
Did she buy anything?
What time did she leave the shop?

POLICE REPORT
FROM WITNESS

Missing person
Mandy Ingrams

Date: 25|9

Name of witness: Jack Priestman
5 Canal Lane, Bristol.

Relationship: None

Mr. P – .....

Listening
Listen to the policeman interviewing another witness, Jack Priestman. Make notes like those in the Police Reports for the other witnesses, Mrs Ingrams and Mrs Hawkins.

Reading
After interviewing the three witnesses, the policeman types out his notes in full. Read the report of his interview with Mrs Ingrams.

Mrs Joan Ingrams who lives at 57, Bath Road, Bristol, is the mother of the missing child. On the morning of September 25th she got up at 7.30. Then she had breakfast with her family – her husband and her son, Mark. Then her daughter, Mandy, got ready for school. She put on her grey coat. Mandy said that it was her teacher's birthday. Mrs Ingrams gave Mandy 20p and Mandy left the house at 8.45. Mandy's school is about five minutes' walk from the house. Mrs Ingrams did not see her daughter again.

Writing
Write reports for one of the other two interviews.

Dialogue Part 2

POLICEMAN: Have you found anything?
POLICEWOMAN: No, nothing. Have you checked with the station?
POLICEMAN: They haven't found anything either. Nobody has seen her. I think...
POLICEWOMAN: Wait a minute! Stop the engine. Look! Flowers! There are some flowers on the bank of the canal.
POLICEMAN: The woman in the sweetshop said something about flowers. You don't think...
POLICEWOMAN: Mandy saw some flowers and climbed down to pick them. Then she slipped and...
POLICEMAN: ...fell in! It's possible. Poor little thing! Ah, here's the other launch. Any luck?
PATROLMAN: I don't know. We've just found this. It was floating in the water.
POLICEWOMAN: What is it?
PATROLMAN: Ribbon. It's a piece of red ribbon...
POLICEWOMAN: Oh, no!
POLICEMAN: You don't think she's...
POLICEWOMAN: Quick! Contact the police station. Tell them we need two divers and tell them it's urgent!

Answer:
1. Why are the flowers important?
2. Why is the red ribbon important?
3. Why do the police need two divers?
4. How do they think the accident happened?

OBSERVATION LESSON 2
Abbs, B. & Freebairn, I., 1982, *Studying Strategies*, London: Longman pp.62-65 & 69

[redacted] A case for treatment

Before you start:

Have you ever been in hospital for more than a day?
Which parts of the hospital routine did (or would) you find difficult?
Which advances in modern medicine do you admire most?

1

Lynne Williams is 38. She runs a dry cleaning business with her husband, Ted. She has always thought of herself as a healthy person but a few days ago she started getting pains in her stomach. One morning her husband noticed her bending over the counter in obvious pain.

TED: Is anything the matter?
LYNNE: No, it's all right. Just a slight pain in my side.
TED: Why don't you sit down for a moment?
LYNNE: No, don't fuss. It doesn't hurt very much. I'll be all right in a minute.

But all that day the pain grew worse. Lynne was sick several times and had a temperature well above normal. Finally she decided to call the doctor. The doctor examined her and diagnosed appendicitis. He said she had to go into hospital immediately and have her appendix removed.

Check

Why did Lynne call the doctor?
What was wrong with her?
Why did she have to go into hospital?

1. Practise the conversation between Lynne and Ted in pairs. Then practise it a few more times, each time changing the part of the body **where the pain is centred, e.g.** shoulder, neck, ear, foot, ankle, waist, hip.

Example: Is anything the matter?
No, it's all right. Just a slight pain in my back.

2.

Fill in Lynne's part of her conversation with the doctor. Read it in pairs.

DOCTOR: Now, Mrs Williams. What seems to be the matter?
LYNNE: .....
DOCTOR: Let me have a look . . . Mm . . . does it hurt when I press here?
LYNNE: .....
DOCTOR: When did this pain start?
LYNNE: .....
DOCTOR: Have you been sick at all?
LYNNE: .....
DOCTOR: Have you been feeling feverish?
LYNNE: .....
DOCTOR: Well, I'm afraid you've got appendicitis. We must get you into hospital at once and have that appendix removed.

3. Lynne goes home and tells her husband about her visit to the doctor. She reports what the doctor asked, what she replied and what she diagnosed. Prepare and act their conversation.

4. Read the piece below about appendicitis from a medical handbook and find alternative terms for:
stomach
temperature
sign
beat of blood
being sick

Appendicitis
Infection of the appendix. The first symptom of an acute appendicitis is pain in the abdomen around the navel. As the infection spreads the pain moves to the lower right quadrant. Vomiting usually accompanies the pain, with slight fever and rapid pulse. The best treatment in most cases, once a doctor is sure of the diagnosis, is removal of the inflamed appendix.

5. Listening

Complete the doctor's notes on Lynne. Use medical terms where possible. Then listen to the doctor talking to two other patients. Complete the missing information in the notes.

❷ What happens in hospitals?

1. Group the following words under the appropriate verb:

TAKE REMOVE TEST
temperature appendix tooth eyes pulse tonsils X-ray ears

2. Look at the pictures below and say what is happening in each, like this:

Picture 1: He's having his temperature taken.

3. Ask and answer in pairs:

Have you ever had your appendix or tonsils removed?
Have you ever had your eyes or ears tested?
Have you ever had your pulse taken by a nurse or doctor?

Discussion

When you were a child, did you ever have . . .
food poisoning?
scarlet fever?
chicken pox?
measles?
whooping cough?

What was it like? What were the symptoms? How long did it take you to recover?

Unit 8

Before you start:

What sort of things do you think you should take with you if you are going into hospital for some time?
In what ways can your family and friends help you?
Why is the daily routine in hospital different from home for most people?
Can you think of any advice that you should give to patients when they go into hospital?

1. Read the Guidelines for Patients and decide what rules and restrictions exist in the General Hospital in Weymouth. Rewrite them using the language in the box below. Compare your list with your partner's.

RULES:
You have to . . .
You should . . .
You're supposed to . . .

RESTRICTIONS:
You're not allowed to . . .
You're not supposed to . . .
They'd rather you (didn't) . . .

2. Work in pairs. It is your first day in hospital. Your partner has been in hospital for several weeks. You ask him/her about the hospital rules, like this:

– Who does our washing?
– You're supposed to ask a friend or relative to do it for you.

Make up some questions like these and answer them.

– What's the food like?
– I've only got my nightwear and toilet things with me. What else do I need?

3. You have now been in hospital for over a week. You find it difficult to get used to the rules and restrictions. Make remarks to your partner, starting like this:

I just can't get used to (the hospital food).
I usually . . .
(waking up so early). I . . .
(not being allowed to . . .)

3

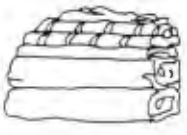
Guidelines for patients

from the Hospital Secretary Weymouth General Hospital

You help us and we'll help you to get better sooner!

Personal belongings

Remember that when you come in to hospital there is never a great deal of cupboard space, so don't bring too many belongings with you. You should bring your own nightwear – pyjamas or nightdresses; toilet articles and some small change for newspapers and for any other items you may require from the hospital shop. Finally, don't forget your medical documents. They are essential.



Washing

It is a great help if you can arrange for a relative or friend to bring you regular changes of nightwear and any clean clothes you require.

Meals

It is very important for you to build up and keep your strength while you are in hospital. Please try to eat all your meals.

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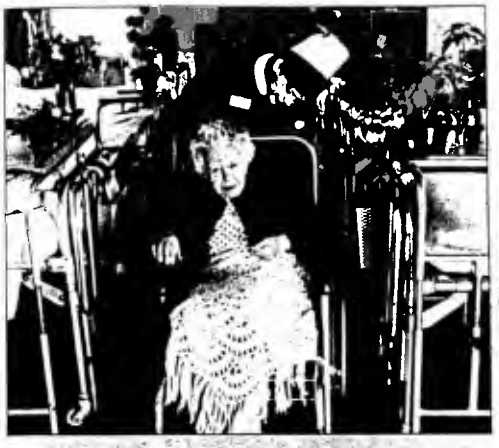

Hospital hours

You'll find that the daily routine in hospital is different from what you are used to at home. The day begins much earlier – usually at about 6am and ends earlier too: bedtime is at about 9.30pm. Breakfast is at 8am, lunch at 12 noon, afternoon tea at 3.30pm and supper at 6pm.

Telephoning

Please don't ask more than one person to telephone the hospital each day to find out how you are. Ask them to pass on the news about you to your relatives and friends.

Smoking and drinking

Please observe the 'No Smoking' signs in the wards. Your Ward Sister will tell you about our restrictions concerning smoking. Alcoholic beverages are strictly forbidden.

Visitors

Visiting hours are 2.30-3.30pm and 7-8pm. Make sure that your friends and relatives know when they can come to visit you. Remember only two visitors round the bed at a time! Visitors with any signs of a cold, flu or other infectious illnesses are not allowed in the wards.

4. Writing

Write short letters for the following situations:

(i) You have forgotten to bring some personal belongings with you into hospital. Write to a friend or relative asking for the things you need.

(ii) Write to your teacher, asking him/her to tell your classmates that you are ill in hospital, and to explain to them about visiting times and telephone calls.

Note: For *making requests* use:
'Do you think you could . . .?'
'Would you mind . . .ing?'

5. Writing

You are in charge of a group of campers on a summer holiday. Write a notice called Guidelines for Perfect Campers, which you will send out to everyone before the holiday. Use these headings:

Equipment and clothes (tent/groundsheet etc.)
Personal belongings
Washing
Meal times
Fire hazards

Oral exercises

1. Explaining what is wrong with you

Is anything the matter?
No, just a slight pain in my shoulder. I'll be all right in a minute.

1. right arm
2. back
3. chest
4. elbow
5. ankle
6. wrist

2. Giving advice about treatment

There's something wrong with my eyes, I think. I can't seem to see too well.
You'd better have them tested then.

My appendix is causing me trouble again.
You'd better have it removed then.

I think I may have broken my leg.
You'd better have it X-rayed then.

1. I can't hear very well. I think there may be something wrong with my ears.
2. I think I may have broken my arm.
3. The dentist says my wisdom tooth is dead.
4. My throat's very sore again. I think it's my tonsils.
5. I'm not sure if I've fractured my wrist or not.

3. Asking about health

I've got another cold!
Oh, do you suffer badly from colds?

1. I think Elsa has got another attack of migraine coming on.
2. Oh dear, my eyes are watering again. The pollen count must be high today.
3. I had another sleepless night last night.
4. We never go to see my parents now. The children always feel ill in the car.
5. Atishoo! Oh, not again! That's the third cold this winter.

4. Talking about habits

Two patients are talking in a hospital.

I don't like waking up at 6 am.
No, I can never get used to waking up at 6 either.

1. having breakfast so early
2. sleeping in an open ward
3. going to sleep at 9 pm.

Extra work

Complete each response like this:
I'm used to waking up . . .

5. Talking about rules and restrictions

Two young people are staying in a youth hostel. These are some of the rules:

> Turn out the dormitory lights at 10 pm.
> Do not eat or drink in the dormitories.
> Do not smoke anywhere.
> Hand in all valuables to the warden.
> Put your bicycles in the shed at night.

Let's read a bit longer. It's only just gone ten.
Well, we're supposed to turn out the lights at ten, so perhaps we'd better not.

Let's have some coke and some crisps then.
Well, we're not supposed to eat or drink in the dormitories, so perhaps we'd better not.

1. Let's have a cigarette.
2. Let's keep our passports in our drawers. It's useful to have them around.
3. Let's leave our bikes here. I'm too tired to put them away.

Unit 8 Study focus

Interaction

FUNCTION	STRUCTURE
1. Asking and talking about ill health and symptoms	'Is anything the matter?' 'a pain in my. . .'
2. Asking about and describing treatment	'to have something done'
3. Talking about rules and restrictions	'(not) supposed to . . .' 'should' 'they'd rather you didn't . . .' 'have to . . .'/'not allowed to'
4. Talking about habits	'be used to' + verb (ing) 'usually' + present simple

ADDITIONAL STRUCTURE
'had better (not)' + verb

Vocabulary

Health: symptoms, diseases and illnesses
Parts of the body
Medical terms

Writing skills

1. Guided informal letter of request and explanation of rules
2. Notice (guidelines) for campers
3. Linked sentences: describing a process using sequencers
4. Guided composition – under headings using sequencers and cohesive devices

OBSERVATION LESSON 3
Abbs, B. & Freebairn, I., 1983, *Opening Strategies*, London: Longman pp.96-97 & 100-103

Unit 12

Dialogue: Part 3

DIANA: Oh no! It's raining!
MAN: My car's in the station car park. Would you like a lift?
DIANA: It's all right. I can go by underground. It's only a short journey. My hotel's very near Tower Bridge Station.
MAN: That's on our way. We live in south-east London.
DIANA: Do you? Well, OK. Thank you. That's very kind of you. Goodness, this rain!
MAN: Would you like to borrow my umbrella? I don't mind the rain.
DIANA: Oh! Thanks.
MAN: Come on, Jason. Run and find our car.

Answer:
What's the weather like?
Where does the man live?
How does he offer to help Diana?

Set 3 Offers of help

1.	Would you like a lift? Would you like to borrow my umbrella?

In pairs, match the situations with the offers of help, like this:
A: I haven't got a notebook.
B: Would you like some paper?

SITUATION	OFFER
I haven't got a notebook.	to borrow my umbrella
I must catch the 9.30 plane.	to borrow a sweater
I haven't got any money.	some help with it
This exercise is difficult.	a lift to the airport
It's very cold in here.	some paper
It's raining.	to borrow my dictionary
I don't understand this word.	to borrow £5

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2. It's raining.
Would you like to borrow my umbrella?
Oh, thank you. That's very kind of you.

In pairs, use the situations in Exercise 1 to offer and accept help in the same way.

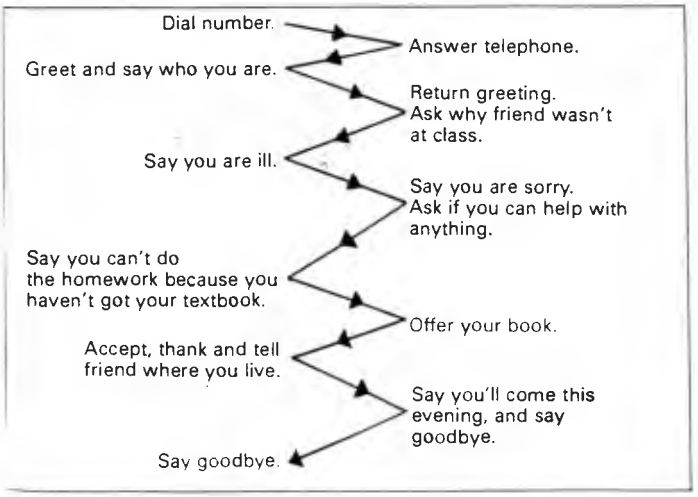
3. It's raining.
Would you like a lift?
It's all right. I can go by underground.
OK.

You are leaving school or work at the end of the day. Offer a friend a lift in your car. In pairs, take turns to offer and refuse a lift. Choose from the following reasons each time:

–you are going to the cinema
–your sister is meeting you
–you can walk
–you are meeting a friend
–you have a car/bicycle
–you can catch a bus

Roleplay

Use the cues below to roleplay a telephone conversation with a friend. One of you was ill and didn't go to class yesterday.



Unit 13 Trouble at the hotel

Dialogue: Part 1

DIANA: Room 201, please.

WOMAN: Ah, Mrs Trent. The police want to see you.

DIANA: What's the matter? Is anything wrong?

WOMAN: This is Detective Inspector Platt from New Scotland Yard.

PLATT: How do you do, Mrs Trent. I'd like to ask you a few questions. Where did you go today?

DIANA: I went to Cambridge. I spent the day there.

PLATT: And when did you leave hotel this morning?

DIANA: I left quite early. About eight o'clock.

PLATT: Who did you see before you left?

DIANA: I didn't see anyone!

Set 1 Past time

Answer:
What time did Diana leave the hotel?
Where was Diana all day?
Who is Platt?
What three questions did he ask Diana?

1.	Where did you go?	I went to Cambridge.
	When did you leave?	I left at eight o'clock.
	Who did you see?	I didn't see anyone.

Complete this questionnaire on what you did yesterday:

TIME	When did you get up?	I got up at . . .
	have breakfast?	I had breakfast . . .
	leave home?	I left home . . .
	start classes/work?	I started classes/ work . . .
	have lunch?	I had lunch . . .
	finish class/school/work?	I finished class/ school/work . . .
	get home?	I got home . . .
	have supper?	I had supper . . .
	go to bed?	I went to bed . . .
PEOPLE	Who did you talk to between 7-9?	I talked to . . .
	see before lunch?	I saw . . .
	have lunch with?	I had . . .
	sit next to in class?	I sat next to . . .
JOURNEY	How did you travel from home to school/work?	I came by. . .
		I walked to . . .
	How long did the journey take?	It took . . .
PLACE	Where did you have lunch?	I had . . .
	have coffee?	I had . . .
	have supper?	I had . . .
	do your homework?	I did . . .
CLOTHES	What clothes did you wear?	I wore . . .
FREE TIME	What about other activities?	I played . . .
	What else did you do?	I visited . . .
		I watched . . .
		I went . . .
		I saw. . .
		I bought . . .

2. In pairs, ask your partner what he/she did yesterday. Ask the questions from the questionnaire.

3. Some people broke into your school last Sunday. The police think that they broke in sometime between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. The police question everyone in your class. Write sentences to say exactly what you did between 8 and 4 last Sunday.

Dialogue: Part 2

DIANA: I'm sorry, but what is all this about? Why are you asking me these questions?
PLATT: I'm afraid someone broke into your room today.
DIANA: Oh no! What did they take? Not my film, I hope. I'm showing it tomorrow.
PLATT: I don't know, Mrs Trent.
DIANA: But why did they break in? I can't understand it.
PLATT: Did you go to Cambridge alone?
DIANA: Yes, I did. My colleague, Mr Roberts, was here at the conference.
PLATT: Oh, was he?
DIANA: Yes, he was.
PLATT: Doesn't your colleague go into your room sometimes?
DIANA: No, Inspector, he doesn't. No one goes into my room.
PLATT: Let's go and have a look. Let's find out if there's anything missing.

In Diana's hotel room.

DIANA: Oh no! The film! It's not here.
PLATT: Is anything else missing?
DIANA: No, just the film.
PLATT: But why Mrs Trent? Why does someone want your film?

Answer:
Why are the police at the hotel?
Why is Diana worried about her film?
When the Inspector asks, 'Doesn't your colleague go into your room sometimes?', does he expect the answer 'yes' or no'?
What is missing from Diana's room?

Set 2 Surprise and interest

1. My colleague was here at the conference.
   Oh, was he?

Practise these short conversations:

GIVE INFORMATION →	EXPRESS SURPRISE AND INTEREST →	SAY SOMETHING ELSE
A	B	A
I'm English. →	Oh, are you? →	Yes, I come from Brighton.
She's a teacher.	Oh, is she?	Yes, she teaches English.
I come from Greece.	Oh, do you?	Yes, I go back there every summer.
I don't like tea.	Oh, don't you?	No, I always drink coffee.
She speaks English.	Oh, does she?	Yes, she speaks it very well.
He doesn't work.	Oh, doesn't he?	No, he's unemployed.
He was ill.	Oh, was he?	Yes, he stayed in bed all day.
He wasn't at school.	Oh, wasn't he?	No, he was ill.
She went to London.	Oh, did she?	Yes, she stayed at the Tower Hotel.
She didn't enjoy it.	Oh, didn't she?	No, she lost her money.

2. In pairs, have conversations about the people at the conference. Express surprise and interest, and say something else about them. Use the information on the right, like this:

A: Diana Trent is a film director.
B: Oh, is she?
A: Yes, she works for Focus Film and Video.
B: Oh, does she?
A: Yes, and she's married.
B: Oh, is she?
A: Yes, and she has a daughter.
B: Oh, has she?
A: Yes, and she went to Bristol University.
B: Oh, did she?

DIANA TRENT,
film director for
Focus Film and Video.
Married with one daughter.
Went to Bristol University

PAUL ROBERTS
cameraman for Focus
Film and Video.
Went to Wolverhampton
Technical College

VINCE HALL
sound technician for the
Sight and Sound Company.
Married with three children.
Went to night school
in Detroit

JOANNE TESSLER
film assistant for
Sight and Sound
Company.
Comes from California,
lives in Los Angeles.
Went to University
of Southern California

3. In pairs, say something about yourselves. Comment with surprise and interest, and add more information, as in Exercise 2. Choose from the following topics:

	Begin like this:
Sports and games you like and take part in.	I like playing . . .
A recent holiday and special things you did.	Last year I went to . . .
Favourite TV programmes and TV stars.	My favourite programme(s) is/are . . .
Free time activities and where you do them.	I like/play. . .
Interesting details about your relations, family or friends.	My sister works . . . My neighbour. . .
Something you know about a national figure.	*(name)* lives/is married to/owns . . .

Set 3 Confirmation

Isn't Diana Trent a film director?
That's right, she is.
And doesn't she work for Focus Film and Video?
Yes, she does.
Didn't she go to Bristol University?
That's right, she did.

In pairs, ask and answer about Paul, Vince and Joanne in the same way. Make negative questions each time to show that you expect your partner to agree with you.

OBSERVATION LESSON 4
Nolasco,R. 1992, *Streetwise Intermediate* , Oxford: Oxford University Press pp. 24-25

PUPPY FAT AND SHEEP'S OIL!

WARM-UP

One *Streetwise* reader is planning to do something quite unusual on his holiday.

Tom Gregory
11 years old

Look at the picture of Tom Gregory. What do you think he is planning to do?

LISTENING

Our *Streetwise* reporter, Stephen Frazer, went to interview Tom.

Listen and answer these questions.

a Where is he planning to swim from/to? How far is it?
b When is he planning to do this?
c What will he be doing to get ready for the trip?
d Do you think he is worried about the trip or not? How do you know?

Improve your wordpower

1 Which of these are high-energy foods?
a sausages *b* pasta *c* beans *d* tomatoes
Name some high energy foods that you eat.

2 Name three things that you can do to increase your resistance to cold.

3 Read these definitions:

practise do something again and again or regularly to improve your skill
train *a* bring (a person or an animal) to a certain standard by instruction or practice; *b* (cause a person or animal to) become physically fit by exercise and diet

Which meaning of *train* was used in the interview?
Complete the sentences with an appropriate form of *practise* or *train*.

a I'll be ____ the piano this evening.
b He's very fit. He's been ____ all summer.
c I've ____ my dog to bring me my slippers.
d I ____ my French when I stayed in Paris.
e You play the flute beautifully. How often do you ____ ?

PRONUNCIATION 1

Sentence stress

Listen and repeat.

a this summer.
to England this summer.
going to England this summer.
I'll be going to England this summer.
b tomorrow.
be working tomorrow.
I won't be working tomorrow.

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Improve your grammar

Future progressive ***will*** **+ be + *-ing***

Example
I'll be doing a lot of swimming in the next few months.

1 We can use the future progressive to describe actions which will be in progress in the immediate or distant future.

Example
Hurry up! The guests will be arriving at any minute!

It is often used for visualizing a future activity already planned.

Example
This time next week they'll be lying on the beach.

2 We can also use it to refer to planned events.

Example
I'll be going to England this summer.

3 It can be used when something is not planned, but will happen anyway because it is part of a normal routine

Example
I'll be seeing Mary at school tomorrow.

PRACTICE

1 Look at Tom's diary for tomorrow.

07.00	*Breakfast*
07.30	*Do my exercises*
08.30	*Run to school*
09.00	*Take history exam*
13.00	*Teach the juniors to swim*
16.00	*Train at the pool*
18.00	*Study for my maths exam*

What will he be doing at the following times?

Example
At 07.00 he'll be having his breakfast.

a 07.30 *c* 09.00 *e* 16.00
b 08.30 *d* 13.00 *f* 18.00

2 Complete these sentences in a suitable way using the future progressive.

Example
At nine o'clock this evening I *'ll be watching television.*

a This time tomorrow I _____
b In August my friend _____
c In ten years' time I _____
d My partner _____ on Saturday afternoon.
e At 7.00 am tomorrow I _____

GETTING STREETWISE!

Responding positively

1 Listen to the extracts from conversations and write down the expressions that people use to react to news.
2 Now listen again. Which of the expressions seem to show real or faked jealousy? Repeat these expressions with the same intonation.

PRONUNCIATION 2

Intonation

Tom is talking to his friend Cathy. Cathy is telling Tom about her holiday plans.

1 Work in pairs. Listen to the tape. Decide what facial expressions and gestures Cathy and Tom might use.
2 Listen again and write down the dialogue. Then practise it using the same intonation as on the tape, and making appropriate facial expressions and gestures.

TALKING POINT

Work in small groups. Discuss these questions.

a What do you think of people like Tom? Do you admire them or do you think they're silly?
b What are the problems of long-distance swimming? What do people gain or lose by doing so much training?
c What will *you* be doing during your next school holiday?

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OBSERVATION LESSON 5
Abbs, B. & Freebairn, I., 1984, *Building Strategies*, London: Longman pp.68 & 70

Unit 9

Set 3 Weather

1. **Match the weather words and phrases below with the pictures.**

cloudy	it's stormy
windy	it's raining
cold and foggy	it's snowing
hot and sunny	it's freezing

2. **Say what the weather is like in your area today.**

3. What's the weather like in Amsterdam?
Miserable! It's raining and cold.
What's the weather like in Malaga?
Lovely! It's sunny and quite hot.

Work in pairs. Look at the chart.
Ask and answer about:

the capital of Greece	two cities in Britain
two cities in Italy	the capital of Yugoslavia
a city in Canada	a city in Spain
a capital city in Scandinavia	a city in Germany

World Weather AT NOON YESTERDAY

	C	F		C	F		C	F		C	F
Amstrdm	R	10	50	Berlin	C	14	57	Cardiff	C	13	55
Athens	S	19	66	Bermuda	S	24	75	Cologne	C	10	50
Barcelona	F	19	66	Biarritz	S	16	61	Copenhgn	C	9	48
Beirut	S	25	77	Birmghm	C	11	52	Dublin	F	12	54
Belfast	C	11	52	Bristol	C	13	55	Dubrvnik	S	17	63
Belgrade	S	15	59	Brussels	C	11	52	Edinburgh	F	10	50
				Budapest	F	15	59	Florence	F	17	63

L. Palmas	S	20	68	Malta	F	18	64	Nice	S	17	63
Lisbon	C	18	64	Manchstr	C	13	55	Oslo	C	12	54
London	R	11	52	Moscow	F	13	55	Paris	C	13	55
Madrid	S	23	73	Munich	R	12	54	Rome	S	18	64
Majorca	S	19	66	Naples	F	17	63	Stockholm	C	6	43
Malaga	S	20	68	New York	C	11	52	Tel Aviv	S	23	73
								Tenerife	F	17	63
								Toronto	C	13	55
								Tunis	F	21	70
								Vancouver	R	10	50
								Venice	C	14	57
								Vienna	F	15	59
								Warsaw	F	14	57
								Zurich	F	13	55

C = cloud, F = fair, R = rain, S = sun, Sn = snow

Reading

Letters to the Editor

Who's going to pay?

Sir,
Last night I watched a Party Political broadcast on television. It was on behalf of the present government and in it, the Prime Minister outlined the aims of the government. It made me very angry.

To be fair, their plans for the future of this country are certainly interesting. They say they are going to build more day nurseries for mothers who go out to work. They say they are going to build more schools and increase the grants of university and college students. Then they say they are going to reduce unemployment; improve the National Health Service; cut the cost of dental treatment. And they say they intend to reduce the level of personal taxation. In the same breath they say they are going to cut inflation and thereby reduce the cost of living and help family budgets. (Are you still with me?) Oh, yes, I nearly forgot. They are going to spend millions of pounds on a nuclear defence system to protect us from an enemy attack.

But the question I want to ask is: where are they going to get all the money to put their ideas into practice? Well, I think I know the answer. The money is going to come out of the taxpayer's pocket. That's right! It's you and me who are going to pay the bill.

Sir, may I suggest that the present state of the national economy means these plans are not only unrealistic, they're irresponsible and completely unbelievable.

M. C. Downing (Ms)
Stockley, Manchester.

Answer:

1. What are the government going to do about day nurseries?
2. What are they going to do about student grants?
3. What are they going to do about unemployment?
4. What about the National Health Service?
5. And what about taxation?
6. How are the government going to reduce the cost of living?
7. What are they going to do about defence?
8. What question does Ms Downing ask?
9. What is her answer?
10. What does she think of the government's plans?

Listening 1

Listen to these people talking about their holiday plans to some friends. Fill in the details.

	Jane	Elizabeth
Country/Place		
Transport		
Length of stay		
Accommodation		
Activities		

Now write two short paragraphs describing their plans like this:
Jane is going to ...

Listening 2

The Ingrams plan to spend a day by the seaside at Weston-super-Mare. Before they leave, they listen to the weather forecast for the day.

Listen to the forecast and make notes about the weather. Then decide what activities would be best for the morning/at lunchtime/the afternoon, e.g. sunbathing? swimming? looking at the shops? having a picnic lunch? going to the cinema? going for a walk?

What clothes should they take? Swimming things? Raincoats? Umbrellas?

Write them a short note with some advice about the day.

Writing

Write three or four paragraphs about your plans for your next long holiday. Say when and where you are going and what you hope to see and do.

OBSERVATION LESSON 6
Abbs, B. & Freebairn, I., 1984, *Building Strategies*, London: Longman pp.84-5

Unit 12 Home again!

Dialogue

ROD: Hello, Barbara! Welcome back! You look marvellous?

BARBARA: Rod! What a surprise! It's lovely to see you again.

ROD: Sorry I didn't telephone you before you left, but I didn't have time, in fact ...

BARBARA: Oh, that's all right. Forget it!

ROD: Well, how was Italy?

BARBARA: Fun, but tiring. Milan was interesting. It's bigger than I expected. Noisier and dirtier, too.

ROD: And Florence? What did you think of Florence?

BARBARA: Well, I've never been there before. I thought it was beautiful. More beautiful than Paris, in fact. Have you ever been to Italy?

ROD: No, never. I'd really like to go to Rome. Well, the car's in the car park. Is this all your luggage?

BARBARA: Yes, but the suitcase is very heavy.

ROD: Barbara! What's in it? Stones?

BARBARA: No, just twenty pairs of shoes! Oh, it *is* nice to see you again, Rod!

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Set 1 Apologies

1. Sorry I didn't telephone you, but I didn't have time.
Oh, that's all right. Forget it!

Apologise for	Explanations
a) not doing your homework	You forgot. didn't have time. lost your book.
b) missing the train	You didn't wake up in time. couldn't get a taxi. Your watch was slow. timetable was out of date.
c) not writing while you were away	You forgot. were very busy. lost the address.
d) not meeting your friend as you had arranged	You overslept. got the time of arrival wrong. had to help your parents.

Work in pairs. Make apologies to your partner, choosing different explanations. Your partner accepts your apology like this:
Sorry I didn't do my homework, but I forgot.
Oh, that's all right.

2. Roleplay these situations in pairs.
a) Apologise and explain to a friend why you didn't come to classes last week.
b) Apologise and explain to a friend why you didn't write or telephone him/her while you were away in London.
c) Apologise and explain to your employer why you arrived half an hour late for work this morning.

swer:
Where did Rod meet Barbara?
Why didn't Rod telephone Barbara before she left?
What did he say when he ıpologised?
What did Barbara think of Italy?
What did she think of Milan?
Has Rod ever been to Italy?
Where's Rod's car?
Why is Barbara's suitcase heavy?
s Barbara pleased to see Rod?

APPENDIX O: FOREIGN LANGUAGE SYLLABUS FOR 4-YEAR GYMNAZIA

English, French, German, Spanish as compulsory, optional & voluntary subjects

(Approved by the Slovak Ministry of Education on 10th January 1997 under the number 1252/96-15 with effect from 1st September 1997) (Translated by I.Garayova)

Aims

Foreign language teaching at gymnazia should aim to teach productive and receptive language skills in such a way as to allow the student to continue the process of language learning, to use the target language for socio-cultural and professional communication and development.

In FLT, the basic aims are therefore communication, transmission of knowledge, and formative learning. The greatest emphasis is to be on communication, in other words on teaching communicative competence in all four main language skills. The syllabus aims to harmonise the student's experience of learning two foreign languages (one to intermediate, the other to basic level). The achievement of a good level of communicative competence in speaking and in listening is of special importance.

As regards the transmission of knowledge , the aim is to provide the students with linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge of different aspects of the countries in question, and in this way to complement, and build on knowledge gained from other subjects.

As regards formative learning, the aim is to foster the skills a young person needs for social interaction, creative thought and speech, critical thinking, as well as qualities such as toleration of others, respect for other cultural values, and finally the ability to apply themselves to their studies with endeavour, perseverance and attention to accuracy. A further aim is to foster development of aesthetic feeling, as well as critical reading and observation.

Content

The FL syllabus is designed to allow systematic development of the following areas of language knowledge, skills and habits:

- the language, its sounds, graphic systems, vocabulary and grammar
- the language, its communicative aspect, in terms of both receptive and productive skills
- social-cultural knowledge, including comparison with Slovakia
- study skills, enabling students to learn effectively, independently and to develop skills necessary to be able to research, process and organise information relevant to different aspects of their lives (personal, social, professional)

During a 4-year study programme, beginner students with 3 lessons per week (approx. 400 lessons) will cover syllabus components as set out below. In the selection of topics and sub-topics to be covered in each year, the subjects committee (or individual teacher) is expected to respect the principle of moving from the known to the less well known, from the simple to the more difficult. It is important to ensure that each selected topic builds on what the students have already done in a progressive manner. The same principle must be observed in teaching the classified sub-skills involved in listening comprehension, reading, speaking and writing.

1.1 LANGUAGE SKILLS

1.1.1 Listening comprehension

* Understanding FL instructions, short monologues by fluent speakers, including native-speakers which contain familiar lexical and grammatical items.
* Gist understanding of conversations or discussions between two or more speakers, including understanding of speakers' relationship to each other derived from context.
* Understanding of short adapted stories, songs, poems with or without textual support.
* Gist understanding of monologue and dialogue on records, radio, or TV broadcasting, played at normal speed.
* Ability to identify key information in a listening text.
* Understanding of the plot of a FL film, and the roles of the different protagonists.

* After preliminary language preparation, understanding extracts from literary texts.
* Ability to take notes from a listening text.
* Understanding short utterances under difficult acoustic conditions (e.g. announcements at bus or railways stations, conversations over traffic noises etc)

Notes: Students need to be familiar with a suitable range of accents, for example for English: an American pronunciation; for German: an Austrian pronunciation; German & French: a Swiss pronunciation.

1.1.2 Speaking skills

* Greetings; starting and finishing conversations with two or more participants
* Asking for and providing information
* Asking for repetition and clarification of information
* Asking for help, offering help, and responding to offers of help
* Asking for goods, services etc.
* Asking and answering questions on a given theme
* Describing an object, person or event
* Talking fluently about a familiar topic, event, book, film, play, personal interests etc.
* Communicating a simple message or report
* Arranging a meeting
* Starting, continuing and finishing a phone call
* Expressing personal opinions in conversations, discussions, meetings
* Responding to, initiating topic changes
* Rephrasing, reformulating in response to requests for clarification
* Presenting a fluent report, adapted to requirements of setting and content
* Providing oral summary of text, radio excerpt or TV programme (with or without the aid of written notes)
* Providing information about life in countries where target language is spoken, giving information about Slovak Republic
* Spontaneous translation of short utterances at suitable level, on suitable topics, from the foreign language into Slovak and vice versa
* Expressing agreement, disagreement, requests, thanks, commands, prohibitions, suggestions, likes, dislikes, apologies, invitations, accepting & declining invitations, confirming, denying; also expressing surprise, intentions, hopes, willingness, promises, insistence
* Reciting a poem, prose extract, song, anecdote in the FL

1.1.3 Reading comprehension

Students are expected to be able to:-

* use correct intonation and stress when reading aloud from text book and other course materials
* understand public notices and announcements
* understand meaning of magazine-style texts of a general, popular-science nature
* identify and take notes on main points in a text
* obtain information from simple forms, prospectuses, advertisements, written instructions, maps, timetables, information brochures etc
* read different types of texts reflecting student's own interests
* while reading, make use of English-English, bi-lingual dictionaries and language reference books
* use appropriate strategies for different reading purposes
* adopt suitable reading strategies to guess the meaning of unknown words in a text

1.1.4 Writing

Students are expected to be able to

* correctly copy out printed or hand-written texts
* correctly take down a dictated text
* compose short notes, messages, reports, post-card greetings, written apologies, curriculum vitae, simple & more complex informal letters, telegrams, written invitations, written responses to invitations, letters & notes of congratulation or condolence
* fill in questionnaires and other official forms (customs declarations, hotel registration forms etc.
* compose written versions or written summaries of spoken texts such as narratives or descriptions of famous people or characters from literature
* write reports on books, films, theatrical performances and other social events, to include their own evaluation of the work, performance or event
* make use of English-English, bi-lingual dictionaries and writing handbooks
* write two final tests each year

1.2. LANGUAGE KNOWLEDGE

1.2.1 Pronunciation

To master suprasegmental features of pronunciation (word, phrase and sentence stress, elision, rhythm, intonation patterns appropriate to different language functions); also to master segmental features (phoneme inventory in the phonological system of the target language) with emphasis on phonological features which differ from those of the Slovak language.

1.2.2 Vocabulary

Through the full course of study, to acquire a basic vocabulary of 1,800 - 2,000 lexical items (i.e. based on 3 lessons per week, approx. 5 new items per lesson) including phrases for everyday social contact. If the number of lessons per week is greater or fewer than 3 per week, the vocabulary target shall be increased or reduced accordingly by 450-500 items.

To acquire receptive knowledge of a further 300-500 lexical items.

To be aware of semantic and stylistic features of the lexis of the FL such as possible multiple meanings of a word, patterns in word collocation, patterns in ways to express semantic relationships, word groupings such as synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, homophones, and internationally used words.

To acquire receptive knowledge of basic word formation patterns. Familiarity with common set phrases used in general conversation.

1.2.3 Grammar

To acquire the basic morphological and syntactic structures required to formulate questions, negations, and to express time and place relations, quantity and quality, comparison, condition, ability and inability, certainty and uncertainty, prohibition, commands, wishes, requests etc.

To acquire receptive knowledge of other common grammar features characteristic of specific texts e.g. popular science texts

1.2.4 Spelling

To know the correct spelling of target lexical items, and related morphological forms (conjugation, declension, comparative forms etc).

To acquire basic rules of punctuation.

1.2.5 Topics and situations

To acquire vocabulary for effective communication in the following situations

a) social situations
* family
* school / education
* every day life & routines
* shopping
* food / eating
* travelling
* individuals in a society
* leisure time
* nature
* jobs and professions
* clothes and health
* art, science and technology
* socio-cultural aspects of life in SR and in the countries where target language is spoken
* other

b) transactional situations
* exchanging information while shopping e.g. discussing goods, prices, paying
* exchanging information about directions e.g. concerning accommodation, eating, shopping
* booking hotel or other accommodation, filling in forms, asking and giving information concerning hotel services, paying for a room and other services
* buying a travel ticket (train, bus, tram, underground, plane, ship) asking, giving information about and using time-tables, storing luggage, exchanging information about travel arrangements (relating to reservations of seats, sleeping cars, deck chairs; also travelling by taxi, passing through customs, form filling)
* sending telegrams, letters, cards, making phone calls, using information services and facilities at post offices

* transactions relating to cultural or sporting events such as buying tickets, asking information about time and place, asking about the programme
* using health services, first aid, explaining state of health to a doctor or chemist
* looking for employment (suited to student's age)
* participating in interviews for summer course work, au-pair work etc

2.1 ENGLISH LANGUAGE

2.1.1 Pronunciation

* Correct pronunciation and distinguishing of English sounds
* Pronunciation of auxiliary and content words
* Intonation patterns relating to basic sentence functions
* Variable stress of English words
* Pronunciation relating to division of the sentence into semantic chunks
* Sentence stress, pronunciation of auxiliary words (articles, prepositions, conjunctions, certain pronouns)
* Knowledge of the most important rules of English pronunciation

2.1.2 Lexicology

Word formation using suffixes and prefixes - generative patterns which allow students to form words from base forms, thereby extending their vocabulary:

* Nouns formed from: -er, -or, -ity, -ing, -ness, -tion, -sion, -ism, -ment
* Adjectives formed from: -able, -ible, -ful, -less, im-, un-, dis-, -y, -al, -ic
* Verbs formed from: mis-, re-, dis-, -re, -se, over-
* Adverbs formed from: -ly
* Nouns formed from verbs e.g. to report - a report
* English words which have been modified to suit the sounds and spelling system of Slovak e.g. computer, production, ecology, culture

2.1.3 Grammar

SYNTAX

A Productive and receptive

* The simple sentence with verbal, compound, and verbal compound predicate (also with infinitive)
* The simple sentence
* Declarative, interrogative, imperative, exclamative sentences and their word order
* Expressing negation
* Non-personal sentences
* Sentences with existential *there*
* Compound sentences with conjunctions *because, so, if, when, that, that is why*
* Sentences with two objects e.g. *I want you to come here*

B Receptive

* Complex sentences with conjunctions for, as, till, until, (al)though
* Complex sentences with subclauses of type *If I were you I would do English instead of French*
* Sentences with conjunctions *neither..nor..., either...or....*
* Indirect speech
* Sequence of tenses

PARTS OF SPEECH

A. Productive and receptive

* Nouns - their main function within a sentence, regular and irregular plural forms
* Articles - definite, indefinite and zero. Basic uses of definite and indefinite articles; commonest occurrences of zero article use
* Pronouns - personal, demonstrative (this, that, these, those) with and without nouns; possessives, interrogative pronouns. Indefinite pronouns formed from *some-, any-, no-, every-*
* Adjectives - regular and irregular formation of comparative and superlative forms
* Adverbs - including their comparative and superlative forms; adverbs formed from *some, any, no, every*
* Numerals - formation of cardinal and ordinal numbers and their usage in expressing amount, time, date, century; usage of *much, many, little, a little, few, a few*
* Verbs - linking verbs, modals, phrasal verbs, verbs with prepositions, adverbs;

formation and usage of verbs in the following tense structures: the Present, the Past, the Future Simple (Indefinite), the Present Continuous, the Present Perfect, the Present Simple (Indefinite) for expressing future after the conjunction *if, when*

B. Receptive

* Distinguishing features of verbs in the Past Perfect, the Past Continuous, the Future in the past, the Passive voice
* Infinitive and infinitive constructions - distinguishing features, and expressing these features in Slovak
* Forms with -ing (gerund, verbal nouns, present participle)

PROCESS

Using Teaching Materials

The syllabus is intended to serve as a general guideline, leaving the teacher free to adapt the teaching content to suit the needs of a particular group of students. The teacher can realise the goals of the syllabus as s/he sees fit. Subject committees, and individual teachers are likewise free to make changes to the programme e.g. by adding or omitting topics or sub-topics, and by deciding what items should be acquired productively and which receptively. Subject committees also have the right to minimise or expand on items specified in the syllabus in accordance with the number of hours allocated to FL teaching (i.e. more or less than 3 hours per week).

For FL lessons, students are to be divided into groups in accordance with instructions laid down by the Ministry of Education. Students who come from basic schools with an enhanced FL programme may be placed in a separate group, depending on the resources of the school and always in compliance with relevant regulations. Again, in the case of such students, the FL curriculum should be modified to suit the higher proficiency level of the students in question. Thus more themes may be included or themes may be explored in more depth. Higher targets my be set in terms of speaking and writing skills

(e.g. higher demands on translation and interpretation, on composing formal / official correspondence). Lexical loads and grammar coverage may also be increased. Higher level texts of whatever type whether fictional, popular press article or popular science.

Teachers may use purpose-written FL text books suited to secondary grammar school, as well as texts from other sources produced locally or abroad. Care should be taken to avoid texts which are unsuitable to the new social situation at home and abroad, or which are unsuited to the likely interests of the students. It is the responsibility of the subject committees and the individual teacher to select suitable materials and subject matter for each year, and to decide on the methodological approach to be used in the exploitation of the selected course book and teaching materials. Care should be taken to choose both content and teaching methodology to suit the cognitive interests of the students. The importance of using up-to-date subject matter throughout, working with national and foreign magazines is emphasized.

In interpreting the goals of the FL programme, it is important that the starting point be the particular situation of each individual grammar school. In Slovakia each school may vary in terms of the number of hours given over to a FL (3,4,5 or more hours per week), the qualifications and experience of teachers (local teachers, native-speaker teachers, qualified, unqualified), the textbooks being used, and use made of other sources of information (TV courses, FL magazines). In addition, the students' own motivation and educational goals cannot be ignored. Thus texts may be selected according to the students' interests (literary texts, subject specific texts etc).

Classroom management

It is important that the approach used maximises opportunities for purposeful communication. Lessons should typically provide opportunities for language practice and skills work. The teacher should keep grammar explanations, especially in the mother tongue, to a minimum, gradually leading students to independent study, and independent

work on textbooks and other materials.

For beginner students, in particular, it is very important to begin with an audio-oral course teaching recognition and production of segmental and supra-segmental elements of the phonological system of the target language (not introducing the written form at this stage). Typical activities for this stage of learning will be listening to and imitating simple texts involving native-speakers. Recognition tasks can be followed up by imitative phonetic tasks in order to ensure acquisition of careful and accurate pronunciation.

FL learning is not a self-serving, isolated activity, but rather a learning tool which students can use in their future lives. It is important therefore that the interdisciplinary nature of the subject be made explicit.

Successful acquisition of a FL depends on motivation, will and application of the students themselves. For this reason, it is important that the teacher gives importance to fostering a positive attitude in the students by careful selection of appropriate tasks in terms of topic realisation, teaching approach and grading of tasks to suit the students' level.

Students showing greatest interest in FL study should be encouraged to take part in available competitions.

In order to evaluate the achievement of aims, evaluation tools should be devised which fit the communicative goals of the syllabus for each language skill. Thus evaluation forms a important final step in achieving the aims of the programme.

APPENDIX P: GRADUATE PROFILE FOR ENGLISH (RAYMANA GYMNAZIUM, PRESOV.)

The Gymnazium graduate will be able to speak two foreign languages, though not to the same degree of proficiency. In the student's major foreign language, s/he will have achieved an intermediate level of competence, having followed a minimum 8-year programme of 3 lessons per week. In the second foreign language, the student will have achieved a basic level of competence, having followed a minimum 4-year programme of 3 lessons per week. A basic level of communicative competence will now be outlined.

The sufficiency of the student's performance will be measured in terms of a syllabus of topics, communicative situations, and forms of writing. Some errors in performance are to be expected, and are acceptable, so long as they do not cause communication breakdown. The syllabus will cover a range of language functions and situations in both written and spoken English. On their own, and with the help of a dictionary, the student will be able to read texts of general interest, as well as more specialised texts (such as popular science texts, brochures etc) suited to the student's particular interests. S/he will also be able to read short literary extracts from set books. S/he will be able to understand listening texts taken from radio or TV broadcasting, including films without sub-titles.

An intermediate level of competence will be measured in terms of a syllabus of themes, situations and functions related to speaking and writing. These will be more wide-ranging than at the basic level. Students will also be capable of greater accuracy and appropriacy of form. The topics and themes covered by the syllabus will be more intellectually complex. The same will be true of reading and listening texts.

At both levels of competence, the student will be capable of independent learning and study. S/he will be able to interpret meaning of unknown words and phrases through guessing strategies, and through the use of dictionaries and other reference handbooks.

S/he will have knowledge of a range of reading skills for understanding gist, scanning for specific information and for intensive study. S/he will have knowledge of learning (memorization) strategies.

The gymnazium graduate will also have a broad knowledge of the countries where the target language is spoken. Together with knowledge gained from other subjects on the curriculum, this will enable the student to create an objective picture of the way of life in those countries, and the contribution that these nations have made to the cultural development of Europe, and of the world as a whole.

For this reason, s/he will have learned respect for the values of other cultures, tolerating opinions and life-styles that might be different from his/her own. S/he will appreciate the need for international understanding and co-operation among states and nations. The student's approach to learning will be characterized by critical thought and linguistic creativity, an interest in literature and art, and finally by hard work, precision and persistence.